

HARVEST-TIDE

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HARVEST-TIDE



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BY

SIR LEWIS MORRIS, K_{NT.}, M.A.

ETC. ETC. ETC.

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PREFACE

The writer is reminded by the date on the title-page that he is no longer a writer of the nineteenth century alone. Possibly this should lead him to undertake not to trespass again upon the indulgence of readers whose good-will he has had to acknowledge repeatedly for almost a whole generation. But it is perhaps too early even now to announce his definite retirement from the literary field. In any case, conscious as he is of his limitations, and knowing well that contemporary criticism of verse is seldom of much value towards fixing its permanent position, he can recall with satisfaction that he has throughout endeavoured to follow the honoured traditions of English poetry. Nor is he conscious of ever having written a line without believing then that he had something to say which demanded expression, or which he could wish unwritten now.

PENBRYN, Jan. 1st, 1901.

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H A R V E S T - T I D E

TO VENUS, THE EVENING STAR

PURE orb serene, that shinest still

Tho' youth be fled and Spring-time done,
And dreary Autumn, dark and chill,

Obscure our brief days' waning sun,

Oh Love. oh radiant Star !

Shine forth, and all is peace and light,

Tho' the sun sink and with him life !

Hide, and the deadly gloom of night

Descends, with hate, and wrong, and strife,

Oh Love, oh radiant Star !

Not thine the glare of garish noon,
Nor fever-heats of wild desire,
Nor craters of the ghostly moon
Silvered with dead phosphoric fire,
Oh Love, oh radiant Star !

But glowing, pure with primrose flame,
Steadfast as virgin-glances are,
Thro' life's swift seasons still the same
Light thou our heavenward pathway far,
Oh Love, oh radiant Star !

THE COMING OF THE MUSE

THE shy Muse, rarely seen, at times
Floats down yet will not stay,
But hides her unembodied rhymes
Far, far away.

From out the blank unpeopled page
There shines no vision fair,
And on the poet's noble rage
Broods cold despair.

In vain to toil, in vain to strive,
Efforts and vows are naught :
No favouring impulse comes to drive
The lagging thought.

Then sudden, 'mid the darkling chill,

Dead hope and strivings vain,

A ghostly radiance seems to fill

His heart and brain.

Far off and thin, translucent, white,

His straining eyeballs trace,

Half-hidden, a phantom of delight,

A sweet veiled face.

And straight, 'tis Life, 'tis Youth, 'tis Spring

That comes his toil to cheer ;

Blithe Fancy spreads a joyous wing—

“The Muse is here.”

O'er foam-flowered wave, o'er snow-clad hill,

She floats, or vernal grove ;

His happy eyes warm tear-drops fill

Of Faith and Love.

Now from the Sunset beckons she,

Now from the Dawn's clear rose,

And sadly now, now joyously,

Sings as she goes ;

Now through the thick life-laden air,

Along the city street,

Fleeting, she draws divinely fair,

His faithful feet ;

Now o'er the Palace, now the Jail,

Lives gilded, lives undone,

Lives laughter-lit, or those that wail,

She hovers on ;

And with her takes the poet's mind,

And heart and soul and will ;

Where'er she leads, a wandering wind,

He follows, follows still !

LE VENT DE L'ESPRIT

THE wind that sighs before the dawn
Chases the gloom of night,
The curtains of the East are drawn
And suddenly—'tis light.

A faint breath wakes the slumbering seas,
Peaks, plains, and forests dim,
The brave birds 'mid the rustling trees
Raise a glad morning hymn.

And all the waiting world around
Adores the coming sun,
New warmth and life, new cheerful sound,
New destinies begun.

So on the old familiar earth,
As on the faintest star,
Where'er a new life comes to birth
The Spirit's breathings are.

Thro' the soul's dim recesses dark
They move ere yet 'tis day,
And she even as the faithful lark
Awaking, soars away.

They blow, they stir the voiceless deep
With winds of fruitful strife,
And from the chills of Death and Sleep
Draw warmth and light and life.

R E M E M B E R

THE swift hours fleet, the brief days steal the years,
There seems scant space for laughter or for tears—

Remember !

The seasons press, Spring hastens, Summer flies,
A flash, and Autumn fades in wintry skies—

Remember !

This truth alone, upon your soul keep graven,
Beyond the imminent deep, there lies a haven

For ever !

Whither, unchecked by life's impatient surges

A Power, a Hand, a Voice eternal urges

For ever !

There, comes not Time nor Change but Peace

and Rest,

And blessèd Contemplation of the Best—

Remember !

A NEW ORPHIC HYMN

THE peaks, and the starlit skies, the deeps of the
fathomless seas,
Immanent is He in all, yet higher and deeper than
these.

The heart, and the mind, and the soul, the thoughts
and the yearnings of Man,
Of His essence are one and all, and yet define it
who can?

The love of the Right, tho' cast down, the hate of
victorious Ill,
All are sparks from the central fire of a boundless
beneficent Will.

Oh, mystical secrets of Nature, great Universe
undefined,

Ye are part of the infinite work of a mighty ineffable
Mind.

Beyond your limitless Space, before your measure-
less Time,

Ere Life or Death began was this changeless Essence
sublime.

In the core of eternal calm He dwelleth unmoved
and alone

'Mid the Universe He has made, as a monarch upon
his throne.

And the self-same inscrutable Power which fashioned
the sun and the star

Is Lord of the feeble strength of the humblest
creatures that are.

The weak things that float or creep for their little
life of a day,

The weak souls that falter and faint, as feeble and
futile as they ;

The malefic invisible atoms unmarked by man's
purblind eye

That beleaguer our House of Life, and compass us
till we die ;

All these are parts of Him, the indivisible One,
Who supports and illumines the many, Creation's
Pillar and Sun !

Yea, and far in the depths of Being, too dark for a
mortal brain,

Lurk His secrets of Evil and Wrong, His creatures of
Death and of Pain.

A viewless Necessity binds, a determinate Impetus
drives

To a hidden invisible goal the freighting of number-
less lives.

The waste, and the pain, and the wrong, the abysmal
mysteries dim,

Come not of themselves alone, but are seed and
issue of Him.

And Man's spirit that spends and is spent in
mystical questionings,

Oh, the depths of the fathomless deep, oh, the riddle
and secret of things,

And the voice through the darkness heard, and the
rush of winnowing wings !

ON A FLOCK OF BIRDS FLYING SOUTHWARD BY NIGHT

ABOVE the silent fields and slumbering town,
Fly onward, fearless wanderers, swiftly fly !
Speed fast, speed far, nor ever settle down,
Unmarked upon the starless midnight sky,
Save where white breasts reflect the city's light,
And from your rushing, pulsing squadrons high
Comes a faint ghostly cry.

Alas ! for the sweet summer past and done,
Again the cruel frozen north-wind blows,
Fly southward, southward still pursue the sun
Where by warm waves the crownèd palm-tree grows.

Leave care and toil and fret and murky air
To us, who with the ever-darkening day,
Chained fast must bear to stay.

Fly on, fly fast, till with the tardy light
A second Summer wakes the purple sea,
And Winter flies, defeated with the night,
Then gliding earthward, slowly, wearily,
By some hushed Afric forest-depths profound,
Or windless glare of some surf-beaten strand
Greet the old Southern land.

But oh ! forget not 'neath that fuller sun,
Our Northern Summer's shy reluctant grace,
The white-robed Spring ere primrose-tide is done,
Blithe June or ruddy Autumn's sunburnt face,
The flowery depths, the golden waves of wheat,
The symphonies of faithful wedded song
Piped gladly all day long.

Here is your home and ours, where the young brood
Were born, and essayed first their callow wings,
Here, where laborious summers gained their food,
And homely love despised all outer things.
Here is full life, not there, though flower and fruit
Unfading spring, and weal be yours and rest,
The North still holds the nest.

Here will we stay content, whose lot is cast
Far in the wintry North, for hearth and home,
And ye, too, when the frozen blasts are past,
Again to this our well-loved land shall come.
April shall come again, and bring with her
New wholesome toils, and ye with northward wing
Shall speed to meet the Spring.

FOR A SCHOOL MAGAZINE

BLITHE boyhood ! shall a jaded Muse,
A world-worn brain,
The tribute of a song refuse
Besought again ?

Long since to my own school I gave
A humble lay,
Mixt memories now gay, now grave,
Of work and play.

The reverend courts, the Minster grey,
The curfew bell,
Still though dim years have passed away,
Remembered well.

The panting chase, the flying ball,
The tented plain,
The plunge 'neath the warm wave recall
Dead youth again.

The happy task, that sweetened rest ;
The soul afire,
The thirst to know, the unsated zest,
For something higher.

The wonder of discovered lore
And wisdom old,
Poet and sage with new-found store,
Words, thoughts of gold,

Visions of far-off precious things,
Shy hopes of fame,
Ambition, spreading soaring wings,
Love's nascent flame.

Ah me ! how far they seem, and yet

So strangely nigh,

Age might its slower limbs forget,

Its dimmer eye.

Again the hopeful youthful heart

Throbs high and fast,

Again the joy, sometimes the smart

Of the dead past.

Not only in old fanes and hearts,

But ever new,

Young schools, young lives with varied arts

The Muse pursue.

Pass on, swift generations pass

Undaunted on,

Each year spreads swifter wings, alas !

Till all are gone.

Soon gay youth, lost in manhood's prime,
Shall fleet away,
Recruit, refresh the waste of Time
By healthful play !

But think ye that the needed rest,
The happier toil,
To him alone are fully blest
Who knows no soil.

Nor let your faithful thought forget
That work or rest,
Him profit most whose soul is set
To gain the best.

FAITH

OH Faith, that through our feeble youth,
Our faltering footsteps didst sustain,
With glimpses of receding Truth,
Now seen and now withdrawn again ;
But always faint and white and far
As stars in summer midnights are.

Not Faith thou wert, if thoroughly clear,
Thou shon'st upon us, ever bright,
If thou like knowledge, steadfast, near,
Wert bathed in all-pervading Light,
And with high noon of perfect Day,
Illumin'dst our unerring way.

Not Faith thou wert ! Ah, shine not bright,

But as of old, o'erclouded still ;

Let no broad noontides blind our sight.

With dawn, with eve, our spirits fill ;

Not all thy hidden rays reveal—

To know is lower than to feel.

BETWEEN THE MOUNTAINS
AND THE SEA

(November 9, 1897)

IN murky gloom, in petulant rain,
Thick swathed our sordid London lay,
White mists obscured the midland plain
Thro' all the drear November day.

But with swift eve, the sinking sun
Smote the Welsh hills, and suddenly
Behold the reign of winter done,
Once more the blue, unclouded sky.

And with the dawn the impatient light
Streams through the darkened cells of sleep,
'Till lo! full noontide broadening bright,
Brings azure sky and sapphire deep.

Oh joy, how beautiful a way
My happy fate prepares for me,
Who journey on this perfect day,
Between the mountains and the sea.

* * * * *

We leave behind the grey old town,
The castle's flawless circuit tall,
Thin turrets like a mural crown,
Decking broad tower and frowning wall.

The faint pyramidal peaks of Lleyn
Rise sheer from out the encircling sea,
The palaced groves of Anglesey
Light the salt stream which flows between.

Moël and the great twin brethren high,
Eryri, king of upper air,
Soar on the clear autumnal sky,
'Mid thronging Titans everywhere.

Unveiled from base to summit all
Show russet fern and golden wood ;
Bare steep, and skyward-climbing wall ;
The fall that lights the solitude.

The rock-fenced fields, the wandering sheep
Climbing the mountain's perilous brow,
And sheltered by the quarried steep,
Village and chapel far below.

And see a dark procession come,
Slow on the sunlit highway sped,
Which bears to his eternal home,
With hymns, some village worthy dead.

And every word that you can hear,
And all the sorrowful measures sung,
Breathe the old Cymric spirit dear,
Clothed in the old undying tongue.

* * * * *

Turn from the mountains to the sea,
The dark blue sea, where on the skies,
Faint as a phantom isle might be,
The hallowed heights of Bardsey rise.

The calm sea ripples on the sand,
The oft-vest deeps are lulled to rest;
A soft breeze breathing from the land
Dispels in mist each fairy crest.

Long miles upon the giddy verge
The swift train labours on its way,
The white gulls swoop ; from surge to surge
The dusky cormorants dive and play.

The stone-roofed, massive homesteads grey,
The stacks by close-bound ropes confined,
Tell of the coming wintry day
Which wings with snow the whirling wind.

* * * * *

The hills recede, till, lo! again,
Perched high in air a tiny town,
And stern above the lonely plain
Harlech's unshattered ramparts frown.

And then, again, a rival band
Of giant mountains close the view,
Cader, Arrenig, Aran stand
Serrated, huge, against the blue.

Last, thy sweet vale, Dolgelly! Where
Is any fairer? Oak-crowned isle,
Blue river, mounting woodsides fair,
The golden haze, the unchanging smile.

Not Como, nor Lugano hold
Serenest azure depths divine,
Nor treasure of autumnal gold,
Nor guardian summits great as thine.

* * * * *

Again a widespread estuary,
And on the lone bird-haunted strand,
The white-winged squadrons circling free,
The land-locked pools, the ribbed sea-sand.

Fair Mawddach's charm returns again,
Sweet wandering Dovey, dost thou pour
A lovelier tribute to the main,
Than glides by Barmouth's sandy shore?

Nay, nay! I fear to award the crown
Of natural beauty; both are fair.
Here the tall hills seem gentler grown,
Here, richer meads, and softer air.

Then comes once more the level plain,
The sandy dunes, the half-hid blue,
The sea-beat towns which woo the main,
The academic towers which grew

Swift as the Caliph's palace fair,
On the loud verge ; the chosen home
Of those who hold the things that were,
Less than the glory that shall come.

And then by labouring gradients slow,
Past park and hall, till ere the night
Obscures the hills, and settles low
On the loved vale, my straining sight

Welcomes the homely scene ; thy steep
Grongar, long sacred to the Muse ;
Broad Towy winding to the deep ;
Langunnor, with thy reverend yews.

Here, though 'tis Life's November, still
Are homely joys, and sunlit days,
Blest memories haunt each modest hill,
And wake the yearning soul to praise.

AH! WAS IT I?

AH! was it I, who loved to spend,
The long laborious Autumn day,
Till the slow twilight neared its end,
Content to chase, to wound, to slay;
Who watched unmoved the victims die?
Ah! was it I?

And was it I, who flushed with pride,
And insolence of swelling years,
Faith's simple teachings would deride,
Taking no heed for saintly tears,
Who scorned the upward path to try?
Ah! was it I?

And was it I who saw the Light
Fade at high noon and leave behind
Dark spectres of a haunted night,
Sick fancies of a clouded mind,
Deep sloughs of sense, lusts of the eye?
Ah! was it I?

Yet was it I whom from life's dawn,
Some ray of a diviner Sun,
Some heavenly music far withdrawn,
Compassed till perilous youth was done,
Some soaring angel-fancies high?
Ah! was it I?

And was it I whose riper age
Knew all the earlier visions fade,
Dull silence quench youth's nobler rage,

Blank solitudes myself had made,
Hope, laughter, sinking to a sigh ?
Ah ! was it I ?

Ay ! it was I—the pitiless child,
The unfaithful youth, the man who saw
With brain mature, and heart grown mild,
The silent, sad, unbending Law !
From change to change Life's seasons fly,
Ay ! it was I !

THE EARTH'S EASTER-TIDE

SING and rejoice, Soul of the world, sing on !

Sing and be glad to-day !

Thy Spring is come at length, thy winter gone,

Vanished and chased away.

Rise in white robes, leaving the tomb, the dead,

Behold, the living Sun calls to thee overhead.

Let the glad Earth her bosom deck with flowers,

A bride with pure, calm eyes,

Let the still sea reflect the cloudless skies,

To-day deep joy is ours,

The Spring-tide of the Soul at last is born,

Our Hope is risen, is risen, this is our Easter morn.

Exult, oh heart. Rejoice, oh Soul, rejoice,

Thy Hope is risen to-day,

Let all things living lift a cheerful voice,

Thy Hope is risen to-day.

No more Death bounds our lives with hopeless pain,

Our Sun is risen indeed ! He lives and reigns again !

TÆDIUM VITÆ

WEARY of life ! Ah ! wherefore live
If Age and Suffering rack the frame,
If Pleasure holds no gain to give,
If Honours pall and with them Fame ;

If Riches fly and Love be gone,
Nor ray of sunshine gild the gloom,
Why linger miserably on,
Why longer cheat the open tomb ?

But Pain may cease and Time bring Health,
And rising Hope expel Despair,
Again the golden glow of wealth
May rout the gathered clouds of care.

Not these, the pains which breed disgust
Of living, but the ingratitude,
Of child or friend, the shattered trust,
The links once broken ne'er renewed.

The Faith once living drowned and dead,
Too long on life's dark waters tost,
The glory dimmed, the vision fled,
The inner voices mute and lost.

These leave us, lonely, desolate,
Bankrupt of hope, and love, and friend,
With nothing from the wreck of Fate
But one dull longing for the End.

THE MARCH OF MAN

MAN that is born of a Woman the pride and the
shame of Creation ;

Man that soars upward to Heaven, and sinks to the
nethermost Hell ;

Man that is lower than the brute and yet higher in
rank than the Angels ;

Man with vile lusts that dishonour, and yearnings
that soar to the skies ;

That can die for the Truth—ay, in torture ; that
wallows in sensual pleasures ;

And is drowned in fathomless sloughs and abysses
of shameful desire ;

That is full of compassion and pity and ruth for his
suffering brethren ;

That robs and tortures and slays, destroying the
image of God.

Dark riddle unsolved, dumb Sphinx, with a twofold
nature eternal,

That speaks no word though the ages fleet by on
invisible wings

Unaltered, though diverse in faith and in race, for
good or for evil ;

High in knowledge, buried in ignorance, always
unchangeably, Man.

Thee I sing, and thine is the Hymn that I essay with
accents unworthy,

Thy high glory, thy deep disgrace, the crown of the
world and its shame !

Ah ! Heaven, through what æons unnumbered thou
wert, while the fires of Creation

Burned fierce, and the earth and the sea still seethed
in a tropical haze.

Monstrous growths in the ooze or the jungle, or
cleaving the ill-defined æther,

Mailed dreadfully, rending talons, fangs horrible,
cavernous jaws !

What power was it strengthened thy arm in a world
of rapine and slaughter ?

What steeled thy spirit undaunted 'mid terrors by
night and by day ?

What else than the force which compelled thy isolate
units together

As never the brute was drawn, for mutual solace and aid.

Long ages of suffering were thine, unarmed 'mid a
monstrous creation,

Hidden deep in the caves of the rocks, by the fear
of thy ravening foes,

Till the sure blight came with the years on that
primal order gigantic,

And the mailed monsters dwindled and failed from
the temperate ocean and earth.

Then fighting for food, men with men, while the
slow-fashioned flint-heads primæval

That had pierced thro' the mastodon's mail, were
reddened with fratricide blood,

Till at last the faint language of signs, in a dumb
world vacant of reason

Grew slowly through age-long degrees, to the ultimate
wonder of speech.

Yet amid all the bloodshed and terror, the famine
and nakedness always,

Were the Father's and Mother's love, and the
innocent smile of the child.

Oh ages, known only to God ! Oh dim generations
forgotten !

Of like nature were ye with our own, of like passions,
glory and shame.

Thus through ages and ages of Time marched the
 long successions unending,
The hunter, the fisher waxed skilful through sad
 generations of men,
Step by step came new powers and new arts, and
 o'er all the Creation dominion,
And man graved on the mastodon's tusk the first
 faint beginnings of Art.
Fire came from the Sun, or the storm-cloud, and
 with it the forging of metals ;
No more the savage tears raw, the blood-stained
 flesh of his prey,
But with hatchet of bronze levels slowly the broad-
 leaved trees of the forest,
And builds him a hut to escape from the sun, and
 the snow and the rain.
Then sews him a garment of skins to ward off the
 rigour of winter.

And the hearth gives comfort and light through the
dark and desolate hours ;

The husbandman tills the earth with rude shares of
newly forged iron,

And sows with each coming of Spring hoarded
treasures of life-bearing grain ;

Silent ages ! but always the gains of the long Past
harvested safely,

Gathered little by little, at length, brought the
triumph of conquering Man !

And last, through a rift in the clouds, like the
blessed Sun seen and then hidden,

There dawns on Man's upturned vision some broken
image of God ;

Obscured by vague terrors as yet, bloody rites and
foul superstitions,

Yet holding within it the power to raise up the man
from the brute.

Then after long æons of pain, step by step, the
savage ascending,
The scattered huts grew to the village, and then to
the wall-circled town,
Strong towers with rampart and moat, the hut
giving place to the palace,
Halls of marble, long colonnades, and ceilings fretted
with gold,
The pride of the races that lived their forgotten
histories vanished,
The gains of the Empires unsung, whose speech
and whose records were dead,
Ere the black-bearded kings from their chariots
pursued the pitiful thousands,
Or transfixed the pard or the lion with shafts from
the merciless bow.
Or who by the mystical Nile, grave, priest-like,
Lords of the Bondsmen,

Swayed through long dynasties dim the voiceless
bewildering years— ;

Those whose name and whose fame together have
perished, older than legend,

Whose ruins, the sand or the forest conceals in its
silence profound.

Perished ! gone ! clean-forgotten of men ! but surely
repeating for ever

Man's story of life and endeavour, and conquest,
and failure, and death.

Age upon age passed away, and the graven records
unfading

Were carved no more on the rocks, but writ on the
tablets of mind ;

The glory of Greece shone forth, the sage, the hero,
the poet,

The lips of Wisdom were touched with a new-born
sweetness and fire,

The painter, the sculptor revered the perfect half-
divine body,

And saw through the veil of the flesh, the immanent
Godhead displayed.

The Godlike was clothed with life by the voice of
the sage, of the minstrel,

Half-divine show the heroes immortal who fought in
the fabulous Troy——

Oh, fair blossom of Man's young summer, oh, glory
and radiance departed,

Oh, white lily springing from mire too foul for the
savage to-day.

Then, the blossom of Beauty past, from strong roots
far reaching ascended

A gnarled tree of secular strength, the o'ershadowing
greatness of Rome ;

Not Beauty, but Law with Might, Titanic, disciplined,
fearless,

Wearing down the pride of the Strong, but sparing
the weak and cast-down.

Beneath that strong Law universal, man faded, and
manacled Freedom

Grew faint, and withered and sank 'neath the blight
of a cankering peace,

Till law fell, trampled down in the dust by the feet
of the tyrannous Cæsars,

And only a phantom remained of the power, and the
glory of old,

And in deep sloughs of sense and of blood, unre-
deemed by the Beauty of Hellas,

Sank the rugged manhood and stern of the legions
that conquered the world :

And not even the new-born Dawn proclaiming its
heavenly message,

Which shone forth, from dying Judæa, could pierce
the thick gathering gloom— :

The West paused long on its march, the weary
Orient slumbered,

No ears had Mankind to hear, the Word that was
sent for their Peace.

Then there rushed from the ends of the Earth,
horde on horde, invincible, awful,

On the shame of a moribund world, the unnumbered
avengers of blood,

And the heart of the giant was pierced and the
shattered idol fell earthward,

And the prisoners of Time were set free, and Man-
kind delivered from Rome.

Then ages on ages of blood that cleansed the dark
stains of Man's story,

And again the tired world awoke in the light of a
long-deferred day,

And the hope of the Race sheltered safe, in the
sacred hush of the Cloister,

Keeping some faint glimmer alight in a world
whereof Darkness was King.

And each century added new rays, till at length
from slumber awaking,

The mighty West leapt to its feet, and again was
Humanity free ;

A new breath breathed on the Race and the swift
generations sped onward,

Adding each some laborious gift to the sum of the
gains of the whole.

Still the long processions speed onward, and still
each man in his station,

Brings his loyal oblation of work to lay on the altar
of Good,

Busy toilers of wider view, a great army of seekers
devoted,

O'er all the wide kingdom of knowledge spread tire-
less and thirsting to know ;

Weigh the Sun and the Stars in the scales, scan the
uttermost heaven and discover

The long-locked wandering star whose vast orbit
brings it again ;

Can predict its return ages hence though no eye now
living shall see it,

And conjecture on faint far planets the work of
intelligent hands ;

Who with re-inforced vision explore the invisible
hidden Creation,

The death-dealing germs of Disease, the secrets of
Life and of Death ;

Who imprison and guide at their pleasure the name-
less force of the lightning,

Till it conquers the darkness of Night, or whirls
 them o'er sea and o'er land,
Who shall make them a way through the air, leaving
 cloud and tempest beneath them,
Till the ends of the earth are linked fast in a holy
 communion of Peace ;
Who shall learn by the power of just laws to raise
 up the down-trodden thousands,
Till Nature's unequal gifts are redressed by the
 wisdom of men.
Bring new fire, oh Promethean Science ! rise higher,
 oh glorified Manhood !
Till thou gain to full knowledge at last of the infinite
 purpose of God !
But can this be the cave-man of old, the naked
 savage primæval,
Hiding deep in the depths of the rocks from the
 winged Lizard's pitiless jaw ?

Wondrous gain ! but broken too oft by reversals and
degenerations,

Not always the secular march lay onward and upward
to Light,

The old Empires faded and sank leaving naught but
some ruins Cyclopic

Buried deep in the sands, or o'ergrown in the
twilight of tropical woods.

The Temples, the altars are gone, the tall carven
columns lie prostrate,

Gods and men lie buried together ; dumb histories,
glory, and shame,

All are gone, and the peasant who delves 'mid the
shapeless mounds starts to discover

Deep hidden, the gold and the gems of the ghosts of
a sepulchred Past.

Still over the populous East, crude beliefs, thin
philosophies, changeless

From the first beginnings of Time, clog millions of
wandering feet,

And the naked savage obscene, fetish - ridden, un-
reasoning, brute-like

Gibbers still with faint jargons of speech through
the limitless wastes of the South.

Shall we hold with more credulous souls the faith in
a purpose Eternal,

Marching on without haste or delay to the final
triumph of Good?

Yea, the great Scheme fulfils itself always, though
slowly with long intermissions,

Wave on wave of the inflowing tide seems at times
to ebb back to the sea;

Where to-day are the wonders of Painting, the
breathing Marbles immortal,

The floreate capitals carven, the vaulted, vaporous
aisles ?

The skill of the craftsmen who reared the huge bulk
of structures colossal,

The lost Arts, and triumphs of Knowledge, the
hidden Arcana of Faith ?

A great silence swallows them all, they have perished,
and no man remembers,

And the gains of the Past are re-won after ages of
travail and tears.

Man that cowered long time in the caves, scant in
numbers, feeble, forgotten,

Is the crown and summit of things, and has filled
and governs the world,

But not yet can he govern his soul ; gross desires,
mean ideals, enslave him :

Not wherefore he came nor whence, nor whither he
goeth he knows.

Life's swift fleeting seasons perplex him, youth passes,
dull age creeps upon him.

Few are blest, while the multitudes labour through
brief lives and fortunes forlorn,

To the grave from the cradle they bear, the un-
satisfied dim generations,

Toil and suffering, hunger and cold, scant pleasure
and undeserved pain,

The shadow of fratricide war, broods deep o'er the
shuddering peoples,

And the round world rolls on through cycles of
sorrow, and bloodshed, and pain.

Nay, oh man, though vainly it seem, still aspire,
struggle onward and upward !

In the Future live, not the Past, trample down the
inherited brute !

Rise from sensual deeps, rise upward. He who
made thee knows to what purpose,

Spurn aside, one by one, with the years, the sordid
rags of the Past.

Give ear to the clear voice calling with mystical
accents unceasing,

That bids thee aspire and ascend in the faith of an
ultimate Good.

Not for thee are the problems perplex of the
methods and ends of the Maker,

Turn with steadfast unwavering gaze to the Light of
the half-discerned Sun ;

Tread down in the mire of dead years the reproach
of the travailing ages,

Raise the wandering savage alike, and the waifs of
the sin-laden streets ;

The ruffian, the wanton, the thief, the bondsmen of
Pleasure or Mammon,

Wasting weariful lives in the chase of ignoble profit-
less ends.

Last of all make the Demon of War put off his false
halo of Glory,

And a league of Brethren conspire for the final
triumph of Peace,

Till the calm voice of Justice shall drown the cries
of tumultuous Passion,

And the criminal shrink from himself at the clear
call of Godhead within ;

Then, O Man that art born of a Woman, the crown,
not the shame of Creation,

Be thou filled with the glory of God, as the waters
cover the Deep !

THE FREEING OF CRETE

At length! at last! at last!

The weary suffering years are past!

Baffled the tigerish Turk slinks from his bleeding prey.

At last! O hapless Isle, at last!

Thy mother draws thee closer to her breast,

Thou, who long ages this auspicious day

Awaitedst, but in vain,

Done is at length, thy age-long pain,

And thou at last, at rest!

Strange are the ironies of Time and Fate,

And dark the pathway of the Eternal feet,

For lo, it was but yesterday that we,

We whose hearts yearned to set the captive free,

Knowing the story of thy misery,
Waited the Hellenic victories in vain.
Ah me ! it was a time of pain
For us, who from our earliest boyish years,
With thee were nourished at one mother's breast !—
Her brave sons, fearless, dashed their lives in
vain
Against the foemen's strong o'ermastering line,
By alien hirelings drilled for victory.
Oh wasted harvest fields of Thessaly,
On which divine Olympus looking, saw
The brute invader trampling Right and Law,
And weak defenders dying but in vain !
Ah me ! it was a time of tears,
Blank disappointment sinking to despair,
Almost our sad eyes seemed to see
The loathly Ottoman once more again
Befoul the city of the violet-crown ;

Loud shrieks of outrage on the affrighted air,
Column again and temple crashing down,
Barbarian vengeance wreaked on all things fair.
Ah me ! it was a time of pain and tears.

But now ! but now ! though scarce a year has gone,
To her high goal our Hellas marches on !
The jealous Powers their mutual hates forget,
And suddenly from failure, from defeat,
She springs unconquered yet.
From clouds and darkness beams her rising sun,
A miracle, a miracle is done !
In full accord the o'ermastering navies ride,
To work the will of Europe side by side,
And Peace accomplishes what War denied—
The net is broken and the captive free !
The sufferings of the dead unhappy Past,
The wrongs, the tyrannies are fled at last.

“Begone!” the banded Admirals cried, “Begone!”

And without stroke of sword or flash of gun

The Oppressor slunk away, his rule of Evil done.

Therefore we sing to-day

“Te Deum” for the victory of Peace;

O Power of Good, at last make Wrong to cease!

We, whose brave sons have died, and not in vain,

In treacherous massacre, with torture slain,

To free our Hellas; we,

Whose England is the mother of all the Free,

We praise thee, and we pray,

Deliver soon the shining Company

That stud the purple of the *Ægean* sea;

The land of Philip’s conquering son;

The rock-built islet of the blind old man,

King of all Singers still; fair regions long,

Shrined in our English Poet’s generous song,

Where long unchecked the spoiler loved to
slay,

And rob and ravish, as he would to-day.

Bind in close union all who love to speak

The sacred accents of the Greek ;

Till at the last the victory won,

Hellas regains her children one by one !

Deliver all, dread Power ! and set them free

From the foul Turk's decrepit tyranny !

And ye, O new-born freemen brave,

Put off the ignoble vices of the slave,

Forget the faults which long oppression breeds,

The feuds, the jealousies of warring creeds.

Be love your guide, not hate,

Not for yourselves take heed but for the State,

Forget the Past, till a pervading Peace

Shall bind you fast to Greece.

Then ye, oh triple peaks of virgin snow,
Which on the warring strifes and woes below,
Looked down unmoved through the sad centuries
Ere Homer sang, no more again shall see
The secular misery ;
The hamlet flaring from the smoke's black shroud,
The huddled flocks, and herds, the affrighted crowd ;
But smile upon the untroubled, peaceful plain,
Where labour reaps its due : the untrampled grain,
The unrifled olive, and the laden vine ;
On corn and oil and wine,
And on the rippling breadths of purple sea,
Lit by white wings of many an argosy,
In the great Peace and Concord that shall be !

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CHRISTMAS, 1898

ANOTHER Century dies,
In war and blood and pain,
Our longing, streaming eyes
Look forth for Peace in vain,
For Christ the myriads fall
Butchered by Turk or Kurd
Comes there no end? Is all
The hope of men in vain?
Comes not the Lord again
O'er all the Earth to reign,
As spake the Word?

Slow are God's judgments, slow,
To Man's impatient thought,
Slow-paced the Ages grow,
In vain the goal is sought.
Armed to the teeth to-day
The jealous peoples stand :
Worse blight than of decay,
Worse burden than of war
The fleets and legions are ;
Dumb terror spreading far
O'er sea and land !

'Tis nigh two thousand years,
Since came the Prince of Peace
Return Thou, calm our fears,
Make strife and war to cease ;
Thick clouds to-day of doubt.
Obscure our faithful sight.

Shine, Blessed Sun, shine out,

• The storms of Passion still,

Again, oh hidden Will,

The wintry Earth fulfil

With Peace and Light !

CHRISTMAS, 1899

"Morituri te salutant."

THE din of the battlefield dies,
The shouts of the foemen are still,
No more from the deep-trenchèd hill
The murderous battle-bolt flies.
Here, alone 'mid the silent slain,
Alone with no comforter nigh,
Too feeble for fear or for pain,
'Neath strange stars in the pitiless sky,
I make ready to die.

Here soon with the dawn's dim light,
Or may be in the lantern-lit dark,
They will find me stretched cold and stark,
A soldier who died in the night.

Is it I who lie helpless here, I,
Who this morning went pulsing with life
To drink the delight of the strife?
I, whose life ebbs away as I lie,
Making ready to die?

Tis Christmas-tide over the Earth,
And thro' all our dear England to-night,
Hearths glow ruddy and hearts young and old are light
For joy of that marvellous birth.

Ah! if only some vision might come
Of the dear ones my eyes cannot see!
If some token of love might be wafted to me
From the silent lips in the well-loved home,
Ere my time comes to die!

Heaven! What is this comforting hand
Which touches my fast-closing eyes,
This Presence which opens a door in the skies,
Where all my beloved stand?

See, see 'tis my mother's kind face !
Smiling grave 'neath her silvery hair,
And my dearest love bending beside her chair !
And my children's careless innocent grace,
All are here, as I lie.

They are joyous, dear children, at play,
With the spoils of the old Christmas tree,
Heaven keep them from hurt and calamity free,
Till their sunny locks are grey.

My brave boy has his sword and his gun,
Like the soldier he wearies to be.
Can I wish for him more when his life is done
Than to fall for our England, if need shall be,
And die happy like me ?

Thank Heaven for the vision ! My heart
Beats high for a moment still,
As when we charged swift up this death-dealing hill
Each man striving to do his part.

I am troubled no longer, but lie
Happy, thinking of hearth and of home,
I rejoice that my dear ones were given to come,
I grow faint, 'tis the end, I am ready to die,
O belovèd, O England, good-bye !

ON AN EMPTY HOUSE

A STATELY house I passed to-day,
Familiar when the world was gay.
How the years fleeting take our lives !
Nought of that joyous Past survives.
Blind casements, railings red with rust,
Dumb doorways choked with leaves and dust,
And see ! the staring placard cold—
“ This noble mansion to be sold.”

Nigh thirty years have passed away
Since each year passing bloomed in May ;
Nigh thirty years, since side by side,
The youthful bridegroom and his bride

Passed careless through that lofty door,
Where now their feet shall come no more.

All splendours that to wealth belong
Were theirs of feast and dance and song,
The gliding lamps that choked the street,
The thunder of high-stepping feet ;
The lights, the liveried crowd without,
The wafted strains, the linkmen's shout ;
The jewelled throng that scaled the stair ;
The star-decked Great, the white-robed Fair ;

And when the whirling town grew still,
Grey on the sunny oak-crowned hill,
The gabled grange, amid the fern ;
Last, ere the sere leaves ceased to burn,
The swallow-flights to chase the sun.
Spring blossoms, bright ere Yule was done,

And by the purple waters calm,
The palace gleaming thro' the palm.

Nigh thirty happy tranquil years,
Child-voices, homely hopes and fears ;
Young girls, springing sweet and good
From infancy to maidenhood.
Soon joyous bridals, year by year
Unbroken welfare, scarce a tear,
Only the bright home stiller grown
When half the nestling brood had flown.

Last, ere chill age o'ertook them, then,
Such is the lot of mortal men,
The pitiless call too early come,
To break the tranquil hush of home,
The fair wife summoned first, then he,
The sad sire fading gradually.

And so the end ; the nest grown cold,
The orphaned lives I know not where ;
Blind casements, dust, and everywhere,
Dim on the dense autumnal air,
Time's epitaph on Rank and Gold—
“ This noble mansion to be sold.”

LIFE-MUSIC

SOUND, jocund strains ; on pipe and viol sound,
 Young voices sing ;
Wreathe every door with snow-white garlands round,
 For lo ! 'tis Spring !
Winter has passed with its sad funeral train,
And hope revives again.

Blow high, blow loud upon the wreathèd horn,
 Sound joy-bells deep !
Green-kirtled summer walks through vines and corn,
 The fenced fields sleep :
The first flowers fade. the green fruits swell, and yet
Fruition brings regret.

Lift joyous harvest-music mellow notes

With merry tunes !

Raise thankful pæans loud from manly throats,

Trumpets, bassoons !

Autumn has left red fruits and garnered gold,

With dawns and twilights cold.

Yet cease not from the use of solemn song,

When the streams freeze ;

For dark brief days and rayless nights and long,

For leafless trees !

Each season should its proper music bring,

Sweet as the songs of Spring.

IN MEMORY OF TWO FRIENDS

I

GWALCHMAI

AGAIN the oft-renewed request,
With time more frequent, to rehearse
In some brief page of halting verse
The praise of Cymry gone to rest.

Thou good grey head, whose long life spread
O'er all this fateful century,
Now thou hast joined the faithful dead,
I bring a wreath of praise for thee.

In many a thronged pavilion fair
Thy thin bent form, these eyes have seen,
Thy medalled breast, thy silvery hair,
Thy clear, calm gaze, thy brow serene.

Oft have I marked thy accents weak
Amid the hushed, attentive throng,
In volleying swift Englynion speak
What time they chaired the Bard of Song.

Thyself an oft-crowned Bard, whose Muse
To th' old alliterate measures sweet
Her voice inspired, did ne'er refuse,
But lightlier tripped for fettered feet.

Nor thus alone, but long time stirred
The passionate, yearning Cymric heart
To choose the higher, better part,
By preaching of the Eternal Word.

So may it be till time is done !
Two Powers for Good of differing name
There are, in noble aim the same—
God's Preacher and His Bard are one.

Dear silent Bard, of kindred blood,
With mine from Mona's wind-swept shore,
I praise thy song, thy work for good,
'Tis only here thou sing'st no more.

II

T. LL. T.

GOOD Friend, whose heart, whose Muse refined,
Were to our Isis faithful yet,
I praise thee with a willing mind
Ere the world hastens to forget.

Thou as befits our tuneful race
Wert touched in youth with Bardic fire,
The Cymric melody and grace
Thy young ambition did inspire.

Long since in thy successful song
The Toiler's praise thou didst rehearse,
Winning by sympathetic verse
The plaudits of the lettered throng.

Fair gift by work's unchanging round
Thro' all thy later years repress ;
Thou hidd'st, by lifelong fetters bound,
The fire scarce kindled in thy breast.

And better thus maybe to bear
Duty's dull burden to the end,
The Teacher's crown of work to wear
That in each Learner gains a friend.

Beside life's duteous liturgies
What profits rank or wealth or name?
A brighter lustre shines on these
Than on the pinnacles of Fame.

Far better to have won the love
By faithful work, of old and young,
Than the admiring throng to move
By song as sweet as Bard has sung.

So I who knew thee well and long,
I whose sole gift it is to sing,
To these memorial pages bring
This votive wreath of musing song.

ON A SCULPTOR WHO DIED
YOUNG

J MILO GRIFFITH

(Obiit. Sept. 1897)

ART smiled on him, but one unchanging frown
For all his days would churlish Fortune keep ;
Too soon we deemed he laid life's burden down.
Nay ! for He giveth His beloved sleep !

VER NON SEMPER VIRET

OH the blithe spring weaves a maze of flowers till
come the glad Midsummer hours

When the sun is shining, shining, Dawn and Sunset
in the skies ;

Yet tho' song and youth are everywhere, upon the
joyous lightsome air,

A cold voice sighs.

“ There shall come a fated end of all, ere Autumn's
leaves have ceased to fall,

And thro' all the sleeping woods there sounds no
trill of waking bird,

And a great hush steals away the joys of youth and
all its merry noise,
And song-tide dies."

Silent yet tolling, tolling deep, like wizard voices
heard in sleep,
The strange sound eddies ceaseless, like a whirlpool
round the soul,
There is silence all-pervading; voiceless echoes
sinking, fading
While the still deeps roll.

And anon a ghostly pealing, on the slumbering
senses stealing,
Life's high, soaring accents hushing, to an undertone
of pain;
Soar, oh Love-strains, high and higher, like a fountain,
like a fire,
Youth is not in vain.

Drown the dismal, deathlike measure, in loud
canticles of pleasure,
Joy of youth, and joy of living, let your blithest songs
be sung,
For though Age with Death conspire, to-day the sun
mounts high and higher,
And the world is young.

ON A MEMORIAL ORGAN

HIS life made music sweeter far than sound,
Here would we keep some echoes that were his,
Who, with the choir invisible around,
Now hearkens to the Eternal Harmonies.

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE

AN ODE

(*June 20, 1897*)

REJOICE, give thanks for all the centuries,
Since first our little island's crescent story,
A feeble radiance woke the waning skies,
To shine in full-orbed glory.
Twelve centuries ago our Britain rose,
Girt round by watchful foes,
And did prevail at last—such power in valour lies,
Such force the brain, the arm of Freedom fires,
Such lofty thought her soul inspires,
Her's were the faults the virtues of the strong,
The passionate love of Right, the burning hate of
Wrong,

Warped sometimes by her too imperious will,
To thoughts, to deeds of ill,
But hearing still through all the voice of Fate,
Proclaim, "Thou shalt be great!"

Mixed is the journey of a nation's life,
Through frowning mountain-pass and flowery plain,
Through peaceful halcyon days, rude storms of
cruel strife,
Brief pleasure, longer pain.
But not in vain has our dear Britain been.
Oh gracious Island Queen,
Mother of freemen! over all the earth,
Thy Empire-children come to birth,
Vast continents are thine or sprung from thee,
Brave island-fortress of the storm-vest sea!
The giant commonwealths which sway the West,
Were nourished at thy breast;

The fair-grown sisters of the Austral main
That hold the South in fee,
Are thine, and love thy laws and speak thy tongue ;
The dusky millions of thy fabulous East,
Dim Empires older than the dawn of Time—
Thy crescent realm on Afric's peopled shore,
+ The white man's grave no more ;
Ruled by just laws, and learning to grow free,
Rejoice by thy Britannic Peace increased.
Thy praise is by a myriad voices sung ;
Thou treadst alone thy onward path sublime :
Thou hast not been in vain !

Great Empire, those who come to-day from far,
Seeking some symbol of our common love,
Know through their souls Imperial pulses move,
Following as did the Magi once, the Star
Of this new birth of Time, this happy reign !

Ne'er in our Crowned Republic's story yet,
Of all that men remember or forget,
This strange, this precious thing has been :
No reign of threescore years of King or Queen
Our annals hold—till in this waning age,
Time's finger writes it on the storied page.
This is the golden link which binds in one
All British hearts beneath the circling Sun,
And this the Star which draws all, far and near,
This aged life and dear !

Ah, honoured thin-drawn life ! who long hast borne
From that far June, when with the earliest morn
The young maid woke with tears,
And innocent childish fears,
The heavy burden of the Imperial Crown,
Thy young, thy aged temples pressing down ;
Who threescore years throned in the nation's heart,
Of all its joys and sorrows, barest part,

Sharing thy people's humbler hopes and fears,
And oft directing through a mist of tears
Our difficult way,—so fragile yet so strong!
Thou seemest to our eyes
Our own embodied Britain, old yet young ;
Not the rude Britain of her arrogant youth,
But loving peace, and filled with gentle ruth,
The Britain, her undying bards have sung.
Our lives are bound with thine, our hopes with thee,
Thy subjects all, and loyal lovers, we
Come from the North, the South, the East, the West ;
From the acclaiming lands beyond the foam,
Seeking their ancient unforgotten home,
Differing in race and tongue, and creed and name—
Senators, soldiers, rulers great in fame,
Thy proud Proconsuls come ;
Down lanes of life the slow processions stream,
Barbaric gold and sunlit pennons gleam,

While all the glittering palace-balconies,
Are animate with bright patrician eyes—
And from our mighty mother, and the hum
Of labour-teeming towns, from mine and loom,
And the blurred forge's mingled glow and gloom,
Throngs the unnumbered league-long crowd,
Waiting with yearning hearts and plaudits loud,
To see along the fluttering flower-hung street,
With trumpet-blare and measured martial feet,
Down clear perspectives of the sunlit ways
The jewelled pageant pass to prayer and praise,
For blessings that have been, and peace, and length
of days.

This pomp makes History. Long years to be,
When all our brave Victorian company
Beyond the circuits of the stars has gone,
The echoes of this memorable day,
Not wholly dumb, nor fled away,

Shall still go widening, widening on,
Till Britain with new fires of Union glow.
Not as the Roman, triumphing of yore—
The slave, the doomed, behind, the conqueror,
before—

Our peaceful pageants show ;
Whereto each daughter-state or subject-race,
Brings its own native pride and grace.
For Union 'tis our severed peoples cry,
For Peace each neighbour-realm, each proud ally !
Princes and Peoples join alike to pay,
Due reverence to a Woman's blameless sway,
And bless with heart and voice this fair auspicious
day.

RENEWAL

Draw near, draw near,
Oh blithe and glad New Year,
Haste, haste our weary souls to cheer,
Draw swiftly near,
Bidding farewell to pain and fear,
And sullen Winter's frown, and ready tear,
Bright hopes and far horizons clear.
Draw near, draw near,
Let ageworn Wisdom hide her wrinkled front severe.

Wake, wake again
Beneath the genial rain,
Pathetic vernal fancies vain !
Come Spring again !

Weave the old flowery chain
Round Youth's strong pulse and throbbing brain,
While Love and Hope remain,
And Life is mixt of Joy and pain.
Blossom again !
Trip by swift, nimble Hours, with Summer in your
train !

TERRA DOMUS

ABOVE the deep-set valley
The mountain-ranges rise ;
Above the clouded summits,
The boundless skies.

Beyond the crested surges,
Broad plains of ocean are,
Beyond the dim horizons
The evening star.

Beyond, above the limits
Of toil and pain and strife,
Gleams like a fitful beacon
The blessed life.

Beyond Earth's quick mutations,
Bright hopes and glooms of fear—
Ah! but high heaven affrights us,
Our home is here!

A GEORGIAN ROMANCE

(A.D. 1900)

“THINK you that after nineteen centuries
Since shone our Hope on earth, there come to-day
No tragedies, no dread abysmal deeps
Of sin, like those of old, the accursed house
Of Atreus, or the fratricides of Thebes,
Or those the shame of mediæval Rome,
The Borgias, or the Cenci, or the rest?
Nay, nay, the same infernal forces still
Assault men's shuddering souls ; amid the glare
Of all our vaunted gains dark growths obscene
Tower high as then—hot passion quenched in
blood—

Lust, incest, fratricide,—these vex us still,
As erst in Thebes or Rome, no fabled tales
Are ours, but, dreadful fact, murders as fierce
And deadly as of old ; the Church may preach
Her sacred message ; the philosopher,
All brain, but little heart, may boast in vain
Mind's victories ; for still Tartarean fires
Rage close beneath the surface scarce concealed,
And whoso stumbles, burns. Deliver us
O Power of Good, for 'tis a hopeless world !”

These dark thoughts held me, as I mused perplex,
This very spring, reading the dreadful tale,
The morning's broadsheet * brought, and seemed to
gaze,
On the blue waters of the Euxine sea,
By bright Odessa, while a fettered crew

* See the *Daily News*, February 15, 1900.

Of convicts whom the inexorable Law
Banished to far Saghalien, shambled by
Dragging their chains ; vile faces, seared and marred,
Doomed for long painful years to fruitless toil
Deep in the sunless mine, till youth and hope
Lay dead, and only some poor wreck remained
Of what long since was man—all, young and old,
Chained each to each, in convict garb, all sign
Of rank and gentle breeding sunk and lost
In fellowship of crime. The wretches filed
To where the black side of the impatient ship
Swallowed them one by one. But as they passed
In pitiful procession to their fate
One my eye noted, tall, who walked alone
In bloom of manhood, proud with steadfast
eyes,
Whom not the shameful garb, nor clanking chain
Nor manacled hands, nor vile companionship

Could quite disguise or mar. Seeing him pass
I seemed to ask the warder of his name,
But that he knew not, nor his rank, but only
That he was called "Prince Ivan." Then I seemed
To question the lost wretch, and hear him tell
In gentle tones this dreadful tale of wrong.

"What, would you know what brings me here? Good
friend,

For in your eyes I see a pitying gleam,
'Twere better not to hear it, for, God wot,
Sometimes I wonder if 'twas I indeed
Who sinned, or if some dread necessity
Worked through me, as the sculptor's hand which
moulds

White marble, or the painter's who draws forth
Dark fancies from the canvas, till behold!
A fiend, not man. I do not seek to hide

My wickedness, but sometimes am perplexed
To know by what gradations swift or slow
What I was once was changed to what I am.
I well remember how I read in youth
The tales of ancient crime, nor ever dreamt
That e'er they might be mine ; but now I go
To pay its penalty, a felon, lost,
Degraded from my rank, doomed for long years
To slave without reward or hope : to miss
All things that make life sweet—though nought
indeed
Could sweeten mine—yet to live hopeless on
Without the power to end it.

I was born

Amid the Georgian snows, of an old race,
And puissant, ere the wily Russian stole
Our land and freedom from us ; a chaste youth
I spent among our mountains. My good sire

Died first, and then my mother. My dear brother,
Filling my father's place and rank, remained
Unwedded, keeping sole the ancestral state
Of our old home ; but me a boy as yet
He tended like a father, till the time
When to our Northern City of the Snows
I went to gain such knowledge as became
My rank and birth. Dear brother, who didst lavish
Thy love and care on me ; in that blest sphere
Where now thou art, freed from this load of life,
Forgive me if thou canst my dreadful wrong,
Or if thou fail, forget it !

The swift years

Fled by and left me man, and brought with them
Such gains of knowledge as my studious youth
Untouched, or but a little, by grosser sense
Or careless pleasures of the idle great,
Prized above all. 'Mid those gay crowds I kept

Dear memories of the old ancestral halls,
The high Caucasian peaks, the snow-fed streams,
Long left but unforgotten, the brisk air
Breathed 'mid the trackless pinewoods of my home.
All these preserved my youth and kept it pure,
Till last, treading the paths of sober love,
I wooed the daughter of a noble house
And won her, and I thought I loved her well.
Ah me ! that I had known what 'twas to love !
Not with blind passion, but with tempered glow
Of moderate fervour, such as lights and warms
Thousands of happier souls who live calm lives
In uneventful wedlock till the end,
Nor dream that they are loveless. Ere we reached
The goal of marriage, since the unfailing use
Of noble houses when their scions wed
Divides the ancestral lands, I, with what joy !
Forsook the noisy city for a while

For my dear native hills. My brother wrote
To bid me welcome. He, too, now was wed
'To a wife the pearl of women, beautiful
As Venus' self, as soon my eyes should see.'
'Come,' he said, 'brother, all I wish for you
Is that your wife be true and fair as mine.'

And then I left the murky city and sped
Swiftly across the interminable plains
To the dear hills. Ah me ! 'tis three brief years,
No more, but since that day what things have been—
All dead ! and by whose fault ? All dead ! but I,
Who come once more to meet the summer sun,
Banished, degraded, chained, whom all men shun,
Doomed to a death in life, far worse than death,
A monster and accurst.

But when I gained the well-remembered hills,
No warning voice proclaimed what things should be,

The weird old towers, the old familiar fields
Showed nought of new, since I a budding youth
Left, who returned a man. There seemed no change
In any save in me, if there indeed,
Seeing that the old loved scenes, the eager air,
Stripped from me all the dusty past, and clothed
My life with a new boyhood. At the gate
My brother waited with a warm embrace
Of welcome. The brief winters which had passed
Since last we met had left scant trace on him ;
Only a broader brow, a form which showed
More stalwart than before ; the past was dead,
The past was gone, and I a boy again,
O'erjoyed with all I saw.

And then I raised
My eyes, and of a sudden knew my doom !

For there within the entrance stood revealed
The woman of my dreams. Of stately mien

As 'twere a Goddess ; the dark lustrous eyes
Of Georgia, the divine Caucasian charm
Which makes our women, fairer, comelier far
Than all the world can match. On the sweet lips
A smile of welcome for the stranger made
My heart throb high ; something I seemed to gain,
I never knew before, as if my life
Had found its complement, the half the gods
Of fable kept when half was given. Deep awe
Chilled me as who at midnight calls his name
And lo ! the answering spirit of himself ;
Or as the hapless hunter when he spied
The Goddess disarrayed ; while from her eyes
Shot a swift answering gleam, half joy, half pain,
Proving a mutual wound. I found no word
Of greeting, when my brother's kindly voice
Made known to me my sister.—' Sister,' said he ?—
Ah, nearer, dearer far than any tie

Of common blood. Yet fenced by equal bars
From honourable love.

What need to tell
The dreadful tale? The hidden fatal fire
Repressed in vain, tho' by no word declared,
Nor guilty save in thought, grew every day
Stronger and dreadfuller.

Day after day
I dallied with my fetters, knowing well
That safety lay in flight ; until at last
I lost the wish to fly. Then one sad night,
Despite our wills, despite our shrinking hearts,
The fire long smouldering leapt in sudden flame,
Scorning restraint, and mounting terribly,
Consumed the bars of honour, duty, faith,
And left our lives in ashes.

When 'twas done
And the long struggle ceased, we knew some ghost

Of happiness, though haunted by the dread
Of imminent ill. Ah me ! when I recall
Those guilty days, compared with what should come,
They show like heavenly glimpses : yet were they
The cause of all.

Day after day the thought
Of what discovery brought with it, mixed sweet
With bitter, hardly as I think the sense
Of wickedness oppressed us, we had found
Some poisonous anodyne to blunt the qualm
Of conscience, and despite our constant fear
Not less 'twas sweet to sin. This is the bribe
The Tempter offers, this the fatal net
He spreads for souls, and damns them, and I
durst not

Break it, nor would, though now the fleeting weeks
Flew onward to my marriage ; and my bride
Who should be soon, wrote lovingly, and fain

Would hasten my return ; but still I found
False pretexes. ‘ It was difficult to divide
Our patrimony, though I longed to end it
And call her mine,’ but went not. At the last,
My brother, too possess’d by noble trust
For base suspicion, thinking I was loth
To leave our ancient home, sent messengers
Unknown to us, bidding them welcome her
To her brother’s home, and she, deluded soul,
Came willingly, Love calling, to her doom.

But when we knew that she would come, such dread
Of what should be possess’d us, that we knew,
As by some sudden lightning flash revealed,
The black abysses round. Bid her not come,
We durst not, that were damning proof indeed
Of guilt, yet if she came, she brought with her
Discovery of our wrong ; the woman’s wit

Swifter than man's slow brain, reads at a glance
The secrets of the heart, and there remained
Vengeance, disgrace, the severance of the bonds
Which now grew more than life—ay, ay, indeed,
These things should be but dreadfuller by far
Than any we had dreamt of. Yet some gleam
Of hopeless hope sustained. As we deceived
My brother, so perhaps should Fortune aid,
We might deceive her too ; and so with dread
Vexing us day and night, we did await
Our doom and hers.

Ah me ! the fatal day
When at the last she came, I hurried forth
To greet her, but the deep o'ermastering sense
Of some calamity she could not name
Oppressed her, and the lying welcome died
Upon my lips as in my eyes she read
A love estranged, and shrank from my embrace,

Shuddering she knew not why. We strove in vain,
I and the partner of my sin, to feign
The welcome which we felt not, and I saw,
Half pitying, how pale she seemed, grown sick
With hope deferred, and how the unbidden tears
Sprang to her eyes, as to my noble brother
She turned, while he with half paternal words
Would comfort her, thinking the deep fatigue
Of her long weary journey from the North
Had sapped her strength. Poor souls, I pitied them
Whose fate drew now so near, though scarce as yet
I knew what must be. At the little feast
Of welcome that we made, a little while
She seemed to shake from her the load of care
That first oppressed. We thought our secret yet
Lay hidden, and grew hopeful to escape
The eyes of jealous love, and so the days
Slipped by, and we grew careless, and I feigned
To love her still, as still I think she loved.

Ah ! fools to hope to escape the searching gaze
Of love's clear eyes. For tho' we strove to hide
Our wrong, one hapless day a furtive glance
Surprised, in one brief instant with a flash
Discovered all. That night a letter came :
'I know your secret, I will go. I pray you
Ere 'tis too late repent you of your wrong.
Make what excuse you will to your good brother :
To-morrow I will go, nor see you more.'

Then in one moment the impassable net
Our sin had spread around us stood revealed,
And the deep pit of hell which yawned before us,
Inevitable. When I strove to feign
Excuses to my brother, his great wrath
Spurned them, and suddenly he seemed to know
The dreadful truth, and love deceived, and faith
Abused, worked such a tempest in his soul
As broke in frenzy. His false wife he drove

Instantly from his side, myself he stung
With fierce reproach, but since I was his brother
He spared my life. Our poor unhappy dupe,
Who yet betrayed us not, with pitying words
He comforted, but bade us from his sight,
Till he should fix our sentence ; but his pride
Of noble birth and blameless life unstained
Constrained him to keep silence.

That same night

I stole to where she was. Without a word
We knew our doom, and the one only way
Of safety, though it led through blood and death,
And how the first transgression from the right
Leads on by crooked paths, till when the day
Is fading, lo ! the inevitable pit,
Fronting the desperate feet ; no turning back,
Nor outlet, but through black depths worse than
death !

Hardly a word we spoke ; our purpose showed
Too clear for speech. I carried in my belt
A dagger, as our Georgian use enjoins,
And she, my bane, and yet my love, my joy,
Pointed to it, and with her little hand
Tried its keen edge, and motioned toward the doors
Here, where my brother slept, there, where our guest,
With such a dreadful smile as leaves a man
A devil. But I dared not do the thing,
And whispered, 'Not my brother.' But she signed
'Both ; it were useless else.' And as I shrank
With tottering limbs, 'Quick ; I will come with you.'
And seized the light, and noiseless gained the door
Where lay the Prince asleep.

One stab, one groan,

And all was done. Then silently we went
To where our poor dupe lay. One stab again
And all was done, and we were free to reap

The fruit of crime ; free, said I ?—nay, but bound
With heavier chains than these.

But when 'twas done

One peril still remained. 'Twas all in vain
Should we not hide the deed ! She bade me wake
An ancient serving-man, who from a boy
Had served my house : him, with what lie I know not
Of sudden passion and revenged offence,
I did persuade, so that he should conceal
That which was done, and with me bear the dead
To burial, and, since 'twas their fitting end,
Should lay them side by side. At dead of night,
None seeing us, we laid them in the mould
Beneath the trees, and with the morning feigned
A story of their flight. In our wild hills
Such things are frequent, overwhelming gusts
Of furious passion, chilled and quenched in blood,
And none would doubt the story. So we dwelt,

I and the partner of my guilt, secure
In the old house ; and all men pitied us,
Who by one stroke of pitiless fortune lost
She the dear husband of her love, and I
My destined bride. Fain had we ended there
The tale of black offence, but still remained
One damning witness. The poor serving-man
Who knew our innocent victims had not fled
And where they lay, held o'er our heads a sword
Suspended by a hair. How could we rest
While this man lived? Sure 'twas a little thing
If we who sinned so deeply sinned once more?
What was a poor serf's life that we should spare it
Who had shed noble blood? And so it came
That ere a little month had staled our wrong
The poor soul died. So sudden was his end
Men talked of poison, but since none could trace
What enemy was his, they asked no more.

'Twas but a nine days' wonder, but perchance
He knew some perilous secret of the Great.

Then seemed we safe indeed, and lived awhile
In decent seeming grief within the walls
Which now were mine ; but (as 'twas noised abroad),
The losses we deplored, the empty halls
Filled with the haunting Past, the corridors
Echoing at night the sounds of ghostly feet,
Troubled our peace. No more the ancient home
She loved, nor I, but loathed it. Most of all
We loathed to pass those dreadful doors which hid
A double murder. Therefore, as the heir
Of the Prince, if dead he were, or as his steward
Till his return, if still he walked the earth,
To a rich neighbour I demised his lands
And old ancestral towers. Then we sped forth,
I and my widowed sister, in feigned grief

But secret joy, seeking to hide ourselves
From prying eyes, as natural law ordains
The afflicted should, and separate awhile,
By different roads, our name and rank concealed,
At length we came together and were wed
By some poor priest, and lived a peaceful life
For three brief years, tranquil, sometimes, and calm
As from a blameless Past, but ofttimes stirred
By sudden storms. Ah ! dark unpitying Fate,
Which kept our lives asunder, lives that sought
Each other, but in vain, till Love was sin,
And sin bred crime.

Far in the frozen North,
In a grey castle 'mid wolf-haunted pines,
We made our home. Three little years we spent
Together,—'twas not long for us who bought
Our gain so dear,—nor was it peace indeed.

We knew, but rather conscience drugged asleep,
Starting with sudden fears—a nightmare dream,
From which we woke with staring eyes and lips
That syllabled murder—for between our souls,
Clinging together, rose the ghostly slain,
The strong man, the weak woman, the poor serf,
All dead and by our hands. And yet I think
We were not all unhappy. Time can wither.
Not Hope alone but holds an anodyne
To blunt the tooth of conscience. Not remorse,
But dread and coward fears, o’ershadowing all,
Blighted our lives, till long security
Brought scarce disturbed content ;—twas little gain
For two souls damned for ever.

Till at last,

When the sad Past grew dim, a horrible dread
Rose with a flaming sword and drave us forth
From that poor guilty Eden. For we read

‘How the new Lord of our lost home commanded
That they should delve hard by, some little dyke,
And when ’twas done, behold two skeletons
Lay side by side. And tho’ twas no strange matter
In our wild Caucasus of passionate feuds,
Where blood flows fast as water, here was proof
Of dreadfuller than wont. For when they raised
The poor remains ; upon the finger-bone
Of the taller shone an emerald signet-ring,
Which all men knew, and ’twas the Prince my
 brother’s,
Who never left his home, but lay beneath
His old ancestral trees, and by his side
A woman’s slenderer form. What mind could doubt
It was the missing girl, whose flight they mourned
For three long years ? Nay, nay, she had not fled.
No secret tale of shame was buried with them
Who lay there thus at rest. The dead girl’s honour

Showed stainless now, and her great kinsfolk's pride
Saved from reproach. They mingling grief with joy,—
Grief she was dead, joy she was pure,—made oath
To avenge her, and the sleuth-hounds of the law,
Already loosed upon her murderers' track,
Quested, as yet in vain. Where had they gone,
The false wife and her blood-stained paramour?
'They should be trapped, since still on Russian soil
Doubtless they lurked in hiding.' When I read
These damning words, fain had we turned to fly.
But whither? since the guarded frontier rose
A wall of brass before us. So we stayed,
In hopeless hope that haply the great peril
Might pass us by, as, trembling in each limb,
The hapless quarry, waiting, hears the cry
Of the hot chase grow louder, nearer still,
And scarcely dares to breathe. And for long months
Our silent trackless forests and deep snows

Baffled the hunters, till, though pale and worn
By long suspense, my guilty love and I
Thought once more we were safe.

Then one grim day

Last autumn, when the southward-flying sun
Had gone, and taken life and hope with it,
There as we sat within the ruddy glow
Of the piled hearth, cheering the solitude,
Two guilty loving hearts, while all around
The tokens of our ill-got wealth relieved
The gloom without, sweet flowers and gems of price,
Rich hangings, and the golden light which keeps
Perpetual June amid the sunless gloom
Of Yule, our summons came. Sudden the door
Swung open, and upon the warmth and light
Of luxury a dank and deadly chill
As from an opened tomb. A rattle of arms,

And quick the stern-eyed officers of law
Stood round us, and we knew the end was come,—
The end of guilty dalliance,—the end
Of long anxieties. For it was Death
That knocked, and Vengeance, and the Powers of
Hell.

And then they severed us, without a word,
Only one long last kiss, and locked her fast
A prisoner in our chamber in the tower.
She had no power to speak, nor chance to doff
Her gems of price, but like a Queen she went
To her doom, for such it was. Great God! how fair
She showed, as, flushed with some strange counter-
feit
Of innocence, and eyes that blazed like fire,
With proud contempt she put from her the hands
That would have hindered. As she reached the stair

She turned and looked on me, and in her gaze
I read a mute farewell, while at my belt
Her eyes seemed seeking something, and I knew
Once more what 'twas they sought. But neither
blade

Nor arm was there. Then I saw fade and die
The fury from her eyes, and in its stead,
Writ legibly for love's keen gaze to see,
A dreadful purpose, offspring of despair.

Then with their pitiless skill, till night was near,
In that luxurious room, where late we sat
Alone, with none to mark us, deep content
Soothing each sense, they plied their torturing art
Of question ; an inextricable net
They wound around us mesh by mesh, while I,
Like a poor bird caught in the fowler's toils,
Was powerless to escape. Fain had I bade them

Forbear and I would tell them all, such horror
Of that sad tale, retold in icy words,
Possessed me ; but remembering who it was
Who shared my guilt, hopeless I wandered on,
Tightening the noose around our lives, but still
Denying all.

Then, when some mocking gleam
Of hope relieved despair, what shriek assailed
My agonised ears ? what body flashed and fell
Past the tall windows from the height above
With a dull crash on the new-fallen snows,
Staining them red ? Ah me ! I knew too well.
I saw death in her eyes when up the stair
Silent she swept. Then, not with grief, but joy
That she was safe from men, her fate fulfilled,
And I need lie no longer, ' See,' I cried,
' She is dead. You shall know all. We two
together

Did those dark deeds. 'Twas Love that urged
us on,

Not that of spouse or bride or brother, but Love
That burns our lives with fire. Now she has gone
Beyond the reach of vengeance on the earth
Let me go too. We did it, we together,
None else; we stabbed them in their dreamless
sleep;

They did not cry, nor suffer much, I think;
'Twas a swift blow! And one there was beside
Who bare them forth to burial. Listen to me!
I poisoned him, because I dared not trust
Our dreadful secret with him. That is all.
I do not wish to live. Respect, I pray you,
That mangled corpse, for she was innocent
In the law's eye and noble. Ye who live
In bonds of happy love for wife and child,
Pity us if you can. I do give thanks

To all the Powers that rule and mar our lives,
No child of ours shall know its parents' shame.
Deal with me as you will.'

But my wrecked life
They spared, since I was noble. Ah! the farce
Of rank and false nobility which gilds
So oft the ignoble brow; but in this place
All men are equal, as they are in Hell,
And I shall spend my manhood in the depths
Of the dark mine, nor put aside the load
Of misery till manhood wanes, and age
Blunts the desire to live. Say, was it she—
My love, who was a wife tender and true
Till the sad day we met; who had no thought
For any but her lord, but lived bright years
Of faithful wedlock—she, who bade me slay
Her love and mine together? Was it I,

The blameless student, whose calm eye disdained
The spell of venal beauty—I, whose thought
Dwelt ever on the heights, and daily walked
In converse with the mighty dead of Time,
With Plato and with Socrates, and him
Who took all knowledge for his own, and him
The Saint of the old East, and Him whose Voice
The round world hears, but heeds not, and the choir
Of Saints and Sages blest ; I, whose soft heart
Sickened at blood and pain ; who did this wrong ?
Or do men bear twin natures, one of Heaven
And one of Hell ? Or is it that to-day,
Despite the gains of Time, the Word Divine,
The counsels of Perfection, with their law
Of Mercy to all things, and Purity
And Justice, still a vengeful Até drives
Our lives to ruin, and a cruel Fate,
Unpitying and resistless as of old,

Turns men to devils? Let me meet my fate;
I care not what shall come. If I should die,
'Twere well; or should I live, perchance long years
May dim the dreadful Past, and leave my age
Cleansed by retributive pain. At least I lose
The haunting fear, the cold voice threatening doom,
Nor yet am wholly damned!

Ah! could we meet,

My love and I, after long punishment
Thro' secular years! For we have suffered much,
We have suffered much indeed!"

These things I heard,

And, musing as I went, I knew again
The old voice heard before, "There is an end
Of Wrong and Death and Hell!"

WHITHER ?

TREAD down, oh Man, beneath thy feet, the brute,
Not that the sinless, innocent brute which still
Goes on its way unshamed, undoubting, mute,
Obedient to the pre-ordained will.

But that which deep within your nature lurks
Unseen, nay scarce suspected ; tooth and claw
Red with the stain of age-long time, and works
Beneath the dull unpitying primal law.

Put off the curse of war, the shame of strife ;
Make thou the hates, the miseries to cease,
But yet forget not that the flower of life
May wither in the windless glare of Peace.

The Heaven our souls desire is more than rest,
Act is our Law, our Joy, our highest meed ;
By work and that alone our souls are blest,
And whoso gains it, he is blest indeed.

Remember thou of how great dignity
Is he who sees life whole and sees it one,
Who knows the Past, and what the world shall be ;
Full grown when its long pupilage is done.

Put off the satyr with his carnal leer,
Put off alike the tiger and the ape ;
Keep justice, love, and reasonable fear,
Immortal Spirit clothed in mortal shape !

Put off alike the worldling and the saint,
The aims, too thin, the earthy, grovelling things ;
The curse of greed, the aspirations faint
For heights too cold and far, for flagging wings.

Put off the ascetic, shun the sensual sty,
Scorn not our dual Nature, nor let Pride
Exchange for fruitful earth the barren sky,
Since Earth and Heaven are here and side by side.

Let Woman be the equal mate of Man,
And let the love of all the race inspire
With deeper glow than earthly passion can
A soul that kindles with diviner fire.

Fulfilled with calm beneficent liturgies
Keep thy undaunted soul, content to sleep,
If such thy Fate, for ever, or to rise
When the Voice calling wakes thy slumbers deep ;

The Voice Divine which sounds from soul to soul,
The Voice which still from Youth to Age doth call,
Unceasing though the earth forget to roll,
And all her wandering sisters swerve and fall.

BY TOWY-SIDE

Ox these fair meads, through half a summer day
Beside the blue-eyed river-deeps I lie,
There comes no sound to chase my dreams away,
Nor veil to hide the clear reflected sky,
The low hills smile around on either hand,
And up the vale the solemn mountains stand.

No change for half a changeful century,
Fair river, hast thou known, since I, a boy,
Would haste of summer noons to plunge in thee,
Snatching unmarked a dear forbidden joy ;
Nor shall a thousand centuries passing trace
One wrinkle on thy smooth unageing face.

Sweet wandering Towy, sinuous, silvery,
Glide on by town and tower, unchanging glide,

Pursue thy path of beauty to the sea,
Till thy flow weds the salt intrushing tide.
Thus rolled of old thy undiscovered flood,
When the new world was born in pain and blood.

Within thy depths, ere man had come to birth,
Dread mailed forms with gory jaws would lurk,
The ravening monstrous shapes which swayed the earth,
Ere Nature framed her last consummate work ;
Thou sawest within thy ooze huge Saurians lie,
And wide-winged spoilers hurtling thro' the sky.

And then for age on age, when Man arose,
The gibbering savage mirrored in thy deep ;
Red wars, oppressions, hatreds, countless woes,
Rude hearts that broke, while Mercy seemed asleep,
While thou, thro' those dim generations gone
Unchanged, unruffled, flow'dst serenely on.

And then thro' all our fateful history,

Long centuries of war and cruel strife :

Our Wales o'erborne, our Britain free and great ;

Our old race rising with renascent life ;—

Still from thy cold hill-fountains didst thou come

To seek as we the Deep which is our home.

Men come, men pass, but thou flow'st seaward still,

Brute Nature, thou immortal art alone !

The sea, the stream, the plain, the heavenward hill

Built high with ramparts of eternal stone ;

We who have life and breath, we faint, we die,

Ye only view unmoved the unchanging sky.

Yon towns and towers shall fall ; the land lie bare

Or choked with forests dense ; and on thy shore

The flocks, the herds, the bathers come no more,

None there shall be to mark that thou art fair.

Only the lone hills shall encompass thee,
Thy comrades blind and dumb while Time shall be.

Thou shalt glide still, fair stream, uncaring on,
Till sea shall be no more, nor earth nor sky,
Till all the hapless race of men be gone,
And some dread fire shall burn thy fountains dry.
Thou in thy changing flow unchanging art,
As is the unchanging changeful human heart.

Glide on, O silent stream : I would a tongue
Were thine, to chant the mysteries of Time !
By one weak voice thou shalt not pass unsung,
Glide to Life's sea continual, sublime.
Thou shalt not pass away unrhymed so long
As men have ears to hear a humble song.

PILGRIMS

SLOWLY against the gradual slope,
Following the morning gleam of hope,
With feeble forces slow,
Our childish footsteps go ;
From flower to flower we stray,
To cheer our upward way,
Till the day draws to noon,
And our life's year to June.

And then while Springtide cheers us still,
We press with Youth's impatient feet
High thoughts and fancies sweet,
Against the cloud-wrapt hill.

Higher we mount, and higher,
Beneath the tyrannous sun
Which, till the day is done,
Burns with unsparing fire.

Love-whispers flutter in the breeze,
Love rests within the grateful shade,
Safe hid 'neath secular trees,
Our summer home is made.
A little, little while
The enchanted noon-tides smile,
Till o'er the summits far,
Behold the evening star.

And then our failing feet again
Slope down to the forsaken plain,
No more the snows, the skies,
Dazzle our weary eyes.

But dewy twilights deep,
And light and warmth of home,
Where, ere the nightfall come,
Love giveth rest and sleep.

Oh, sacred Love, still at my side,
My feeble faltering footsteps guide,
Oh blessèd Presence still,
Upon Life's rugged hill,
Let thy protecting arm
Save us from hurt and harm.
Guide Thou us, lest we stray
Far from Thy perfect way.

AN OLD POET

My hand, my pen, lie still,
My voice is dumb,
No more, unsought, at will
Bright visions come ;
No more on faëry meads,
The light forms dance,
Nor borne by wingèd steeds
Speeds swift Romance
Along the rugged road,
With toiling paces slow,
Bent by Time's heavy load,
The dull feet go.

The clear Dawns now shall grow
For younger eyes,

I mark no more the glow
On sunset skies ;
Fearless across the foam
The gay barks fleet,
But mine no more may roam,
Since rest grows sweet ;
Toil brings its fitting meed,
The haven's rest ;
Toil has its joys indeed,
But this is best.

Let younger footsteps soar
To snows untrod,
I strive, I climb no more,
Musing with God.
Through the closed gates of home
Unheeded, half-forgot,

Fainter the memories come

Of what is not.

The Past shows like a dream,

The Present hurries fast ;

Courage ! Life's seaward stream

Flows calm at last !

IN PRAISE OF NIGHT

No breath of morning wakes
The languid dreaming night ;
Nor through the thick leaves breaks
A gleam of light.

But on the brooding calm,
And ghostly silence deep,
Is shed a dreamy balm
Of Rest and Sleep.

Then sudden, thro' the trees,
Listening, unstirred around,
Flutters a fairy breeze
With whispering sound.

And straightway from the throat
Of some half-waking bird,
One hesitating note,
Dawn's earliest word.

And then the tranquil night,
Faints in the garish ray.—
Loud song, and broader light,
Alas! 'tis Day.

ON AN OLD STATESMAN

NIGHT falls, nor yet we may discern the Dawn ;
The sick Age dies, and with it takes the Great,
Like perfect music trembling to its close,
Or some full river smoothing to its end.
Thou art gone from us, O friend,
O precious life that so long served the State ;
Thou art gone from us, and fled,
To join the undying dead !
Dead ! nay, to lie so long breathing reluctant
 breath,
With fainting forces, is not Life but Death ;
But at the last to 'scape Earth's toil and strife,
That is not Death but Life !

That is not Death ! and thou, thou art not
dead,

Strong soul, belovèd head,

Tho' hidden in some secret sphere afar,

Some faint, undreamt-of star,

In God's mysterious infinite air,

Hidden we know not how, we ask not where !

There is no Death, but only change

To some new higher birth and strange ;

There is no Death, but thou, thou livest still,

Brave soul, undaunted will.

Thou silvery tongue, thou old man eloquent,

Stout patriot, hater of triumphant wrong,

Who ever didst despise the ignobly strong ;

For threescore years to guide our Britain sent.

There is no Death, nor will we mourn to-day,

Only our prayers we send to speed thee on thy
way.

But oh ! if fair faint memories of the Earth
As is our hope, breathe thro' thy newer life,
Forget not thou, in that thy higher birth,
The dear dead Past, thy noble emulous strife,
The victories of Peace, the friendless weak
For whom thy swift tongue ever burned to speak.
Forget not thou our well-loved land, nor yet
The wider Britain of our hope forget,
Nor those who on the sad Armenian plain—
As late on earth thou knewest with bitter pain—
The Moslem fiend dishonours, tortures, slays ;
Nay, in the pauses of the eternal Psalm
Ceasing a little, while from praise
Of Him who is " most sure in all His ways,"
Wrapt in a holy calm,
Plead thou and intercede
For all weak sunken lives that here on earth do
pine !

Plead thou, that War's black curse may quickly
cease

In all-pervading Peace,
And speed, if any voice once mortal can,
The onward March of Man.

ON A YOUNG STATESMAN

IN MEMORIAM: THOMAS ELLIS

BALA, *April* 11, 1899

HERE in this place of Peace we make his grave,
Tranquil, alone,
Only Llyn Tegid sobs with constant wave,
The low winds moan.

Here as the silent mountains stand around
Salem, the blest,
Comes no faint murmur of contentious sound
To break his rest.

For this was he whom happy, favouring Fate,
In manhood's bloom,
Called to high service of the grateful State,
And then—the Tomb.

Child of the people, ever proud to keep

The ancient tongue,

The stern strong Faith, the bardic measures deep,

The old hymns sung.

The Tiller's lot he knew, borne down, distrest,

With none to teach,

The God-sent gifts by ignorance repress

Fired his swift speech.

Blossom and fruit of that new Dawn of gold,

That happier Spring,

Whither our Wales, with lofty hope grown bold

Spreads her glad wing.

Ah! deem it not that he was called from toil,

To rest too soon,

Escaping from life's sad years' blight and soil,

While yet 'twas June.

Whatever is best, His will be done,

We dare not weep ;

Not all His work is wrought beneath the Sun

Who giveth sleep.

Sing, sing in faith your hymns! Give thanks! Rejoice!

“ Ac yn ei fedd.”

Let the dead hear his country's grateful voice,

“ Duw rho dy hedd.”

LYDSTEP CAVERNS

HERE in these fretted caverns whence the sea
Ebbs only once in all the circling year,
Fresh from the deep I lie, and dreamily
Await the reflux current stealing near.
Not yet the furtive wavelets lip the shore,
Not yet Life's too brief interlude is o'er.

A child might play, where late the embattled deep
Hurled serried squadrons on the rock-fanged shore,
Where now the creaming filmy shallows creep,
White-horsed battalions dashed with ceaseless roar,
Stirred by no breath, the tiny rock-pools lie
Glassing in calm the blue September sky.

The shy sea bares her guarded treasures here,
Her delicate bosom open to the light,
Unclothed I lie, where never foot comes near,
Unshamed as 'twere in watches of the night.
Fine as a maiden veil of thinnest lawn,
From the white strand the creamy vesture drawn.

Here in the cool recesses of the cave,
'Tho' sweet to lie, to dream, 'twere doom to sleep,
Lest sudden some impatient crested wave,
High-horsed, unbitted from the outer deep,
Shut fast the gate of life, and choked the breath,
And left me prisoned in the vaults of death.

To-day the many-hued anemone,
Waving expands within the rock-pools green,
And swift transparent creatures of the sea
Dart through the feathery sea-fronds, scarcely seen,

Here all to-day is peaceful, calm and still,
Here where in storm the thundering breakers fill.

Here where the charging ocean-squadrons rave,
And seethe and shatter on the sounding shore,
And smite this high-arched roof, and wave on
wave

Fall baffled backward, with despairing roar,
Or fling against the sheer cliffs overhead,
And sow these vaults with wreckage and the dead ;

Now all is still. Yet ere to-day is done,
Where now these fairy runnels thread the sand,
Five fathoms deep the swelling tides shall run
Round the blind cave, and swallow rock and strand,
And this discovered breast on which I lie
Shall clothe itself again with mystery.

Here through the rayless darkness of to-night,
Great fishes, fiery-eyed, with ravening jaw,
Hungering will sail, and gorge, and rend, and bite,
Obedient to the pitiless primal law,
And black eels, slimy, sinuous, haste to tear
The hapless swimmer drowned and drifting there.

And from their secret hollows in the deep,
Mailed things obscene, hooked claw and waving horn
Where now I lie, will thronging dart and creep
To batten on the violate limbs forlorn,
Great devil-fish with strangling arms will cling,
And sting-rays flap and slide on impish wing.

And then again the ebbing tide will spurn
The dank, dead thing which lived and thought to-day,
Or haply whirl it when its forces turn
To the lone plains of ocean, leagues away,

Sunk in its rayless depths for evermore,
Or flung dishonoured on some alien shore.

So full is Nature of unrest and change,
So wasteful of her work, so deaf, so blind,
So careful of her brute decretals strange,
So careless of the empery of mind.
To her the hearts that burn, the souls that soar,
Are as her humblest weed and nothing more.

Yet like the soul in this, her fullest tide
Ebbs furthest, and her inmost deeps lays bare !
Turn reflux wave and swiftly deepening hide,
These haunted rare-revealed abysses fair.
There is a calm more perilous than strife,
Better the droughts, the steeps, the glare of life !

LUX IN TENEBRIS

AH ! what is life ? A flickering fire
That on the black vault feebly burns,
A force which struggles to aspire,
Then sudden, quenched to earth returns.

And what is Truth ? Our striving eyes
Pursue in vain the fleeting light ;
Beyond the darkling hills it flies
And ere we gain them, lo ! the Night.

And what is Knowledge, but a gleam,
A little light, a puny spark,
A phantasy, a ghost, a dream,
Which only glimmers in the dark ?

The low sun sinks, the night is here,

Life, Truth, and Knowledge fade and die ;

But from the illimitable sphere,

New suns unnumbered light the sky.

ON THE THAMES EMBANKMENT

(August 1897)

IN the hush of the midsummer night
The roar of the City grew still,
There shivered a breeze thro' the sentinel trees,
Like a thin ghost fleeing the light.
Then the Dawn came up dreary and chill,
And not another sign of life might be
But the black river rolling seaward sullenly.

But, there by the parapet side,
Oh! what is that pitiful throng
Stretched supine, drowned deep in the waters of sleep,
Dotting the riverside pavement wide,
Like sere leaves down the vistas long ;

That sum of hopeless, homeless misery
Fringing the sullen river labouring to the sea?

At times from Dome and from Tower,
High minster and abbey gray,
Falls the solemn swell of the echoing bell
With its knell of the world's dark hour,
With its hope of the heavenly Day ;
But not a sound reaches those hapless ears
Drugged deep by drink and weariness and tears.

With no rest for the weary head,
The stern city's outcasts lie,
Ruined lives brief and long, the feeble, the strong,
With the granite their only bed,
Sad comrades in misery ;
And the mouldering obelisk rears its wedge sublime
As erst by the old Nile in the infancy of Time.

Ah ! beneficent magic of sleep,
Fair country of dreams thrice blest,
Where old hearts grow young and old love songs
 are sung,
Where the tired eyes forget to weep.
Where the stiffened limbs loosen in rest,
And folly, failure, wantonness, nay, crime,
Seem cleansed in those still depths, and all the
 stains of time.

There they dream till the aching limb
Wakes the sleeper to life's dull pain,
And the hoarse croak of Death chokes the labouring
 breath
And the dulled senses, happily dim,
Seem barbed with new anguish again ;
And still no happier sight or sound may be
Than the black river labouring sullen to the sea.

But to one poor wanderer there
Comes the trampling of measured feet,
And the harsh command, which constrains him to
stand

In the dark lantern's blinding glare
With a heart that forgets to beat ;
Not thus his long dead mother woke her son
When work and bread were his and the brief night
was done.

“Move on !” rings the short, sharp word :
But where shall the wanderer go,
With no share from birth in the niggardly
earth,
More homeless than beast or than bird ?
Whither carry his burden of woe ?
Yet the Law speaks, and he must needs obey,
And hopeless fare alone upon his desperate way.

Then he sprang with a bitter cry
From his lair on the cold, hard stone,
Stood a moment upright in the Dawn's drear light,
Then, bidding his comrades "Good-bye,"
Leapt into the depths with a groan.
A plunge, a sound, and that wrecked life is gone,
While the black leaden river rolls unheeding on.

Only a wanderer's life,
One of myriads who linger behind,
Crushed to earth, trampled down by the merciless
town,
And its cruel struggle and strife.
Not the less to a questioning mind
These sad tales preach the solemn mystery
Of Life, and Fate, and Death, and the dark swallowing
Sea.

IN PRAISE OF DECEMBER EVENINGS

SLOW on the waning landscape creeps the night,
On hill and plain the gathering shadows fall,
Till, last, soft darkness like a velvet pall,
Veils all the fading fields and blinds the sight ;
Then from the hidden hamlets here and there,
From hillside cot, or stately mansion fair,
Clear through the frosty, or the milder air,
Twinkles home's beacon-light.

Dear, swift December evenings, homelier far
Than are June's perfumed twilights, warm and still,
Her saffron skies, and primrose evening star,
Her golden sunsets on the purple hill,

Her sports upon the green, her village boys
Chasing the bounding ball with merry noise,
Her dreaming lovers' visionary joys
Which fill young spirits still.

Thine is a sober loveliness, denied
To those glad twilights of triumphant June,
When all the flower-lit fields are glorified,
And Love and Youth move to a joyous tune ;
Too strong, too fast, the impetuous pulses come,
Too restless for the calm content of home,
Too far afield the impatient fancies roam
In Life's young Summer-tide.

But thou, in solemn robes of sombre grey,
The wayward, wandering fancy dost recall,
Thy star-sprent mantle hides the dying day,
Gently thy kindly, brooding shadows fall ;

By June's rich voice Love's melodies are sung,
The glad, the blithe unreason of the young ;
Thine the low tranquil tones, the silvery tongue
Which calms and comforts all.

Fall, swift December evening, not with snow,
Rude blast, or drenching rain, but clear and fine,
With breathless calm, or West-wind whispering low,
Till Yule-tide brings again its hope divine !
Summer is gone, with anxious hopes and fears ;
Life's tranquil, wintry joys, its precious tears,
The lamp that lights, the hearth which warms and
 cheers,
Are all, are only, thine !

THE UNION OF HEARTS

AN ODE

THE Spaniard has fallen ! has fallen ! Give thanks
and rejoice,

Great West, with a consonant voice ;

The Spaniard has fallen, the blight of the ages
has fled,

And for ever the rule of the priest and the monk
lies dead

Upon the Philippine and Cuban shore.

By the Pacific and the Carib sea

The savage Spanish soldier comes no more,

The isles once more are free,

No more the down-trod peoples cry in vain,

In long-unheeded pain ;

They are free, they are free once more, after rebellious
years

Of misery and tears.

Famine, Oppression, Torture, Murder, long
Stalked through the land, and all the hosts of Wrong,
But now the black night spent, the reign of Evil done,
High in the unwonted skies a miracle appears,
And from the West ascends the fair unhopèd-for Sun.

Thrice happy are the eyes which mark
Amid the unbroken dark,
A feeble, struggling ray,
The first precursor of approaching day ;
We who live now, midst crash of shot and shell,
And wreck, and blood, and fire as fierce as hell,
Discern a wonder to renew the Earth,
New-mailed to-day a Titan comes to birth.
Born late in Time, the Empire of the Free,
Lording the West, co-heiress of the Sea,

By whose strong arm and stronger thought and word
Shall all mankind be stirred ;
A might which joined with England's shall increase
The happier doom of Man, the victories of Peace.

Strong were our brave forefathers bold,
Who fought the stubborn Don before,
On many a perilous sea and tropic shore,
In those adventurous days of old ;
Who chased his towering galleons one by one
From sea to storm-tossed sea, from shoal to rock,
Till that great tempest blew fierce with resistless
 shock,
And God accomplished what their hands began.
Laud we the dauntless sailors, whose rude might
Saved Europe and the world from the long curse
Of the priest's crooked ways, and worse,
The Ignorance he loves as bats the night.

Not yet a century has fled since he,
Champion of every European sea,
Fought in his little ship of English oak
With those proud banded fleets, and broke
Not Spain alone, but spurned the tyrant's yoke
Which menaced all the trembling world ; and kept
Inviolatè our motherland, who bore
The mighty empire we acclaim to-day—
Our daughter who shall keep
Dominion o'er the deep
When we and all our power have passed away.
Laud we our watchful sires who never slept,
But kept alive, undimmed, by land and sea
A beacon fire, the Freeman's sovereignty.

Laud them, but never let our thought forget
The fresh wounds bleeding yet ;
The brave knights-errant who by land and sea,
'Mid pestilence and misery,

'Neath blinding suns, and glare, hunger and thirst,
Sought only who should face the foeman first,
Mown down by shot and shell, yet climbing
still

Against those grinning casemates on the hill;
For hours untended 'neath a tropic sky,
Left hopeless in the pitiless glare to die.

Young lives for whom till then, Life's primrose way
Lay smiling uneventful day by day.

Sons worthy of their sires, who willing gave
Wealth, health, love, life itself to free the slave,
But those for home and country fought, while they
For alien sufferings flung their lives away.

And praise those strong new Paladins of to-day
Who keep alive our glorious story still,
The dauntless seamen who with patient skill
Waiting on daring, drove the hapless prey

To wreck and ruin, while the unerring stroke
Of giant bolts the steel-mailed cruisers broke,
Scatheless themselves, and yet whose pitiful hand
Succoured the vanquished. Worthy sons are they
Of Drake or Nelson, or that gallant band
Those later heroes of their own loved land,
Who bore for all to mark, the chivalry
And daring of the Sea.

Nor shall a generous people yet
Their eulogy forget
Who fought a hopeless fight and fought it well ;
The humble lives which in the blazing hold
Half-naked, bleeding, dreadful to behold,
Braved the dread doom of fire,
Who lately from the leaguered harbour went
With lace and cross and warlike ornament
To death as to a feast. Stout hearts and undismayed !

Not to the free alone, but to the slave

'Tis given to be brave.

Nor lastly shall our souls forget

The mighty silent sister, whose strong fleets

Stud each discovered sea,

Whose warm heart after age-long discords beats

Oh, sister land, in harmony with thee !

But for her watchful squadrons who can tell

What stress of sordid jealousies befell,

What hindering force of harm,

The glorious work of thy avenging arm ?

'Twas England's might secured thy work to thee !

Kinsman to kin allied, freeman to free,

Together oh, great sisters, ever keep,

Together rule the highway of the Deep,

Together sound the knell of tyranny,

Swear a great oath that Thought and Man are free !

Together raise a beacon from afar,
The Light of Equity too strong for War,
Together let your tranquil realms increase,
Till all the future of mankind is Peace!

SIR GALAHAD

LET others sing with earthy lays
Of women fair or brown ;
Not such the Goddess that I praise
As worthy of a crown.
A snowy neck, a sparkling eye,
Red lips and rippling hair,
Not these the charms for which I sigh,
Not these adorn my fair.

Let those who will, with crapulous mirth,
Exalt the praise of wine ;
I hold their joys of little worth,
Not such a worship mine.

To the enfranchised soul and thought
The sordid gains of sense
And mean delights are less than nought
Compared with innocence.

But let me chase from vale to hill
My visionary Love ;
Pursuing ever, baffled still,
Yet beckoned from above.
From youth to age, from life to death,
This dream my soul shall keep,
Till with my last expiring breath
I wake at length from sleep.

A CAROL

DARK are the days, the nights are long,
Blithe Summer's joys are done,
Yet in our hearts we keep the Sun,
And raise a cheerful song.
Bare is the world, or deep in snow,
Yet are our souls aglow,
What spell is this, what still mysterious voice,
That calls " Rejoice ! Rejoice ! "

It is, that on the weary earth
With every dying year
A great hope dawns, a glorious birth,
Returns our souls to cheer.

Again, again, the Eternal Child,
The Virgin-Mother mild,
Ring, joy-bells, ring, clear through the frosty air,
Ring gladness everywhere.
✱

Sound, gracious as that heavenly word
Of old in Bethlehem,
By night of wondering shepherds heard,
When angels spake with them.
“Peace, peace on earth to faithful men,”
This be our strain as then,
To-day, to-day let all rejoice indeed,
Whate’er their form of creed.

Peace be and joy! Ay, though it seem
To world-worn eyes and ears
Across dark gulphs of strife and tears
Only a heavenly dream,

Divine, divine our souls shall hold

Those precious words of old,

Goodwill and peace to men—the halt, the blind,

The poor, nay, all mankind.

Therefore we raise our cheerful song,

A strain of solemn mirth,

Our hope is clear, our faith is strong,

In a regenerate Earth.

No doubt shall come our eyes to dim,

Or check our faithful voice,

To Peace on Earth, we raise our Christmas hymn,

Whose burden is “Rejoice.”

AT THE POPULAR CONCERTS

(1868-98)

SILENT with listening soul I hear,
Strains hushed for many a noisy year,
The passionate chords which wake the tear,
The sweet old love-songs dear.

The dreams of youth surround me still,
Thin thronging ghosts the benches fill,
The old hopes glow, the old fears chill,
Dead aspirations thrill.

A little graver, or more gray,
Though thirty years have fled away,
Scarce changed, the same musicians play
The self-same themes to-day.

How swift Time fleets, yet here how slow,
How scant the visible changes show,
New hopes inspire, new empires grow,
Yet still the master's bow

With magic wakes the slumbering string;
Glad tears, the slow bass gains to bring;
The silvery, swift sonatas ring,
High soaring voices sing.

'Tis I am changed, yet ah! not cold,
Oh, precious tones and strains of old,
Still round Life's warring discord fold
Linked harmonies of gold.

SHINE CLEAR, SHINE BRIGHT

SHINE clear, shine bright, celestial wells of light,
And pierce the mists that bound our earthly sight,
Dispel, disperse night's gathered shades away,
Till the dawn broadens into perfect day.

Sound pure, sound clear, upon the listening ear,
High faultless accents of the starry sphere ;
Silence earth's warring cries of doubt and pain,
And wake the primal harmonies again.

Calm blessèd hands unfelt, rebellious sense,
With the cool vestal touch of innocence,
Beam on us still, invisible gaze serene,
And lift our minds where long our hearts have been.

Thus only shall our purgèd spirits rise
Thro' sight and touch and hearing to the skies,
Thus only our enfranchised souls pursue
Some ghost, some note, some vesture of the True.

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

Av, thou hast gained the end
Of long and glorious strife,
Consoled by love and friend,
Thrice blessèd life !

If all the immortal die
What gain hath life to give,
If all the immortal live
Death brings no sigh !

Oh, long life lit with praise
For Duty nobly done,
High aims, laborious days,
And the crown won !

Why should we mourn and weep
That thou dost toil no more?
At length God gives thee sleep,
Thy labours o'er!

The crying of the weak
Called not to thee in vain;
Thy swift tongue burned to speak
Relief to pain.
The lightning of thy scorn
No wrong might long defy,
Thy ruth for lives forlorn,
Thy piercing eye.

Good Knight! no soil of wrong
Thy spotless shield might stain;
Thy keen sword served thee long,
And not in vain.

Oh, high impetuous soul,
That, mounting to the Light,
Spurned'st the dull world's control
To gain the Right.

'Mid strife the Century dies—
Massacre, Famine, War ;
The noise of groans and sighs
Is borne afar.
The monstrous cannon roar,
The earth, the air, are torn,
'Mid thunderings evermore
Time's Dawns are born !

But thou no more art here,
But watchest far away,
Calm in some peaceful sphere,
The Eternal Day.

Oh, thou who long didst guide
Our Britain's loyal will,
Invisible at her side
Aid thou her still !

Oh, aged life and blest,
Wearing thy duteous years,
Enter thou on thy rest ;
We shed no tears !

Wear thou thy labours to thy country given,
Thy eloquent tongue, thy keen untiring brain,
Thy changeless love of Man, thy trust in Heaven,
Thy crown of Pain.

DARK RAYS

THROUGH the abysses unsuspected roll
Dark orbs unnoted by the bodily eye
Yet visible to the soul,
The labouring ages wane and die,
Low burns and lower life's expiring sun,
Man's history is done.
Yet tho' no eye detect the rayless star
Shed from those unimagined regions far,
Blind influences are.

Yea, though it fail to shine,
Some dark, invisible light,
Some secret force malefic or divine
Pierces the encircling night.

Not only 'neath high noon's unclouded sky
Our onward march is spent,
But with us on our dim unlighted way,
Mysterious guides are sent ;
Dark powers unseen, for good or ill,
Direct, mislead, oppress man's hesitating will.

FOR BRITAIN

A SOLDIER'S SONG

(December 1899)

OH, our Britain is a noble realm, as all the nations
know,

She fought the Don, the Gaul, the Russ, and brought
their boastings low ;

She rules the stormy main, she holds full half the
earth in fee,

And where her glorious banner flies, there every man
is free.

Chorus—Then cheer for noble Britain all, with one !
two ! three !

Triumphant ever shall she be, o'er land and
over sea ;

The sword and gun were never forged, could
make our Mother rue,

While stalwart arms and loyal hearts are to
their Country true.

May be the crafty Muscovite would bring her great-
ness down,

May be the Dutchman grudge's her her greatness
and renown ;

Our friends across the herring-pond grow spiteful
now and then,

So ironclad let her navies be, and hearts of oak her
men.

Chorus—Then cheer for noble Britain all, with one !
two ! three !

Triumphant ever shall she be, by land and
over sea ;

The sword and gun were never forged could
make our Mother rue,
While stalwart arms and loyal hearts are to
their Country true.

Ay, never fear for Britain, let the plotters work their
will,
Let them skulk in treacherous ambush, belching fire
from rock and hill ;
Though her generals may blunder, though her bravest
sons are slain,
Though her best blood flows like water, and the
sacrifice seems vain—

Chorus—Still cheer for noble Britain, and ere yet
your tears are shed,
Tend the wounded, feed the children, who
have lost for you their bread ;

Never doubt our final triumph, we will rout
them, never fear,

When we bolt them from their rat-holes, to
the open, fair and clear.

Let us set our teeth together, till the bloody task is
done,

Never doubt our final triumph—we will make the
Burghers run,

Lance, bayonet, and sabre we will make the rebels
feel,

Krupp himself can forge no truer than our home-
made British steel.

Chorus—Then cheer for noble Britain all, with one!
two! three!

Triumphant ever shall she be, by land and
over sea :

The sword and gun were never forged could
make our Mother rue,
While stalwart arms and loyal hearts are to
their Country true.

March together! all are comrades, peer and peasant,
knit in one,
North, South, East, West, by common bonds, till
all the peril's done,
Scotch, Irish, Welsh, Colonial, with our England's
power and pride,
One Queen, one Realm, one People, and Columbia
at our side.

Chorus—Then cheer for noble Britain all, with one!
two! three!
Triumphant ever shall she be, by land and
over sea,

The sword and gun were never forged, could
make our Mother rue,

While stalwart arms and loyal hearts are to
their Country true.

FROM DAWN TO EVE

THE swift dawn groweth,
The frail flower bloweth,
Solemn Eve brings her shades,
The sweet blossom fades ;
This is the secret of the ancient Earth,
This is the primal mystery of birth.

Full noon rides on high,
Through the shadowless sky,
Black clouds gather round,
Fanged with fire, big with sound ;
This is the tale of Life, portentous, strange,
Chequered with pain, the sport of Time and
Change.

The fountain upspringeth,
The strong pinion wingeth,
The weak waters sink down,
And the tired bird has flown ;
This is in brief the tale of the breathing of breath,
This is the sum of man's story from Birth unto
Death.

ON A BIRTHDAY

(May 24, 1899)

FOURSCORE long years, fourscore !
Maiden and wife and mother, pure and white,
A blameless life lived in thy people's sight,
What would our longing more ?

Fourscore blest years to-day,
Lived on a giddy height, yet not borne down
By the great burden of the Imperial crown,
In solitary sway.

All the long perilous years
That thou hast ruled, always thy people's Queen,
Loyal to Law and Freedom hast thou been
Through joy alike and tears.

Throned in thy nation's heart
The despot's crooked ways thou could'st not know ;
To watch the broadening tide of freedom grow,
This was thy selfless part.

Always thy people's pain
Thy tender woman's heart with pity stirred ;
Thy generous hand, thy gracious royal word,
Were never sought in vain.

Upon thy widowed throne,
Seated apart from all in lonely state,
Alone, thou didst confront thy regal fate,
Unaided and alone.

Nay ! for thy royal heart
Thy people's love sustained ; blest memories still
Of too brief happiness thy soul could fill
And nerve thee for thy part.

Sustained, supported still
In that deep solitude which hems the great ;
A feeble hand to guide the helm of state,
But an Imperial will.

And ranged around thy throne
Children and children's children, puissant, strong,
His offspring even as thine, a sceptred throng ;
Nay, thou wast not alone !

Of pageantries of state
Patient, the hills, the seas thou holdest dear,
A crowned Republican, simple, austere,
Contented to be great.

Oh, aged thin-drawn life,
Whose golden thread binds fast the world in peace,
Not yet, not yet, may thy worn forces cease
To bar the gates of strife !

Thy grandsire flung away
A people's loyal love thro' stubborn pride ;
Re-knit to-day, the kinsmen side by side
Acclaim thy gentle sway.

No higher glory thine
Than this, the best achievement of thy life,
That sister peoples spurning hate and strife
For peace and love combine !

Fourscore such years, fourscore !
No greater gift than this high Heaven can send ;
Front thou unfearing, Mother ! Sovereign ! Friend !
What still it holds in store !

A FRAGMENT

THEN rose a shout,

As of a people long-time mute, which found
A sudden voice and with it power. The cry
Blending in one loud roar, the unnumbered sum
Of petty dissonant lives, laughter and tears,
Rage, terror, pleasure, triumph ; mingled, blent
In one consentient utterance ; burst a flood
In thunder down the echoing colonnades
And dim recesses of the storied shrines,
Where dwelt the elder gods ; big with high dooms
And presages of Fate. Then, ere it fell,
The clamour like a bickering thunder rolled
Afield beyond the city gates, and woke
The silent river loitering to the sea,

Till the shy sea-mews wailed. Last on the hills
Untrodden, dim, which hung 'tween plain and sky,
Mounting it smote, and on her eyrie roused
The watchful, nesting eagle, till she raised
Her half-closed eyelids ; the light-footed fox
Pricked a keen ear ; all birds and beasts of prey,
Seeking their meat in silence in the night,
Paused from the quest a moment at the shock
Of that strange formless roar. Anon it died,
Swallowed in silence ; and the loneliness
Of that still listening world grew terrible,
As is the ghostly rush of worlds which wheel
For ever through the ages dumb and dead ;
Yet no voice came. But what had been, had been.

ARMED PEACE

(January 1899)

THE hopes of Humanity fly, the doubts and the
terrors remain,

Knowledge droops and the Churches sigh, and the
world is girdled with pain,

The shadow of War broods deep, alike over mainland
and sea,

And men's eyes stare vacant of sleep for thought of
the evils to be.

Man sickens as under a curse, and only his burdens
increase,

Scarce are War's dread calamities worse, than the
blight of an Armèd Peace,

Deflowered is his innocent youth, brought low is
the Pride of the Race,
With its wings that would soar to the Truth, fallen
earthward in deep disgrace.
The young men sober and chaste, strong sires of the
ages to come,
On the stews or the tavern waste the temperate
virtues of home ;
The maidens their destined wives, in pure wedlock
and motherhood sweet,
Pine unwedded, unsought, and alone, or dishonour
the sin-befouled street.
Allured and engrossed by the cost of the engines of
slaughter and pain,
Half the fruits of Science are lost, spent on deadly
devices in vain ;
Overburdened, fettered and bound, faint, despairing,
ill-housed and ill-fed,

The workers lie crushed to the ground in a bitter
striving for bread ;

In kennels obscene they are pent, where hardly a
hound should dwell,

While the wealth that might free them is spent on a
nightmare of imminent hell.

Scarce a pittance is left men to spare for the needs
of the pitiful throng,

Who assail them with impotent prayer in vain, tho'
the suffrage be strong ;

Nor succour to give to the old, the feeble, the out-
casts forlorn,

Who in nakedness, hunger, and cold curse God that
they ever were born ;

Nor clear voice of learning to rouse the slumbering
spirit and brain,

Nor Homes of Compassion to house the sad sum
of incurable pain.

For Moloch cries loud for his dead with a thunder-
ous roar, and his shrine
Craves the flesh of the peoples for bread, and the
blood of their slaughter for wine.

THE FORTUNES OF BRITAIN

(*April* 1898)

My Britain, they cavil and sneer,
And bid thee take heed to thy ways,
Forgetting, oh Motherland dear,
Thy secular praise !
How wherever thy proud banner flew
Freedom followed, with order and right,
And thy sails lit the limitless blue
Like pillars of Light !

Nay, my England, thou wilt not forget,
Thou the mother and home of the free,
The bounds by thy Destiny set
'Twixt the nations and thee.

Not thine, the mad folly to boast,
With the braggart delighting in war,
But to guard thy inviolate coast,
And thy children afar.

No need for their warning is thine
Lest thou fall from vainglory and pride ;
Oh, mother of men, half-divine,
Bearing sway far and wide !

Though the frost of the Muscovite chain
The nomads Rome never might tame ;
Though childless France crackle in vain
Like a thorn-brake aflame,
With no worthier message to guide
The peoples who bow to her rod,
Than crowned Wantonness, Faith thrust aside,
And denial of God ;

The stiff German's mechanical drill
Dash to ruin the hopes of the South,
Till men hear with a wondering chill
The harsh words of his mouth ;
Till Armenia, till Hellas again
Are swept by the Mussulman flood,
And the loathly Turk triumphs in vain ;
Through torture and blood.
None of these know to build up the State
Reared to Heaven on the rock of the Free,
Nor dare the Imperial Fate
Which is given to thee ;
No offspring of their's over sea
Shall replenish the wastes of the earth,
No empire in days that shall be
Of their loins, come to birth ;
They shall pass, while the world marching on
Takes no heed for their fugitive name,
But though their brief puissance is gone,

Shall remember thy fame.

Thine, oh mother, it is, thine alone,

The hearts of thy lieges to move,

To raise up the myriads who groan

To Freedom through love !

From the North to the South thou shalt sway,

Thou shalt sway from the East to the West,

From the Dawn to the setting of Day,

Thy rule be confest.

So long as thou workest for Man

Through Freedom and Justice and Peace,

Let thy enemies strive as they can,

Still thou shalt increase.

Yet not long shall thy Empire endure,

If thy wandering footsteps have trod

Crooked pathways, o'ershadowed, obscure,

Far from Light and from God :

Thy strong fleets and armies shall fail,
Thou shalt fade from the knowledge of men :
But march onward, be bold and prevail,
God helping, till then.

Not on armies or fleets let thy might
Be built, oh dear Motherland sweet,
But always toward Mercy and Right
Set thy labouring feet.

Who in these things rejoiceth ; her pride
Is the pride of the Faithful and Just,
And her name shall be glorified
When all else is dust.

IN ANOTHER ALBUM

FLIT softly, Muse, nor dread too much thy fate,
O'er this fair cloistered pleasaunce of the great ;
Ah me ! through many a close-locked shrine of yore,
Thy young wings flew where now they come no more.
Here amid gathered stores of every art,
Essay once more to do thy courtly part.
See, of thy kinsfolk, on the storied wall,
The taper neck on which the axe should fall ;
Hard by, her daughter too, the maiden Queen,
Who broke the tyrannous Spaniard's pride, is seen.
Here with the painter's art, rich ceilings glow,
And nymph and goddess light the scene below ;
Unfading tapestries enrich the stair,
And the dead grandame still is young and fair ;

The old East brings the Persian's subtle grace,
The lattice which reveals, not hides the face,
The potter's fictile hand, the goldsmith's skill,
In costly ranks the ordered chambers fill ;
All precious things, which make existence sweet,
And dull the tramp of Time's advancing feet.
Flow gently, ink, nor with rude blot deface
The page a Queenly hand has deigned to grace.
Crown, Muse, thy head with flowers discreetly gay,
For Springtide summons, and the hour is May.

APOLOGIA

BE failure mine, not fame ;

Let not the ignorant, applauding crowd

With coarse Hosannas loud,

Worse than the carping critic's venal blame,

Flout my dishonoured name.

I alone know the goal I strove to win,

How strait the gate, how few may enter in,

How high the white peaks loom upon the skies,

Too far, too fair, too faint for mortal eyes.

Brief is our road, evil and few our days,

Spare them the insult of unworthy praise !

Let the conspiring throng

Laud the obscure, the inarticulate line,

Which, wilfully defrauding sense and song,

Drags its dull length along,

Or those whose doggerel Muse delights to teach
Treasures of gutter-speech.

Such praise be never mine !

Too great, too deep the reverence I owe

To those whose pious hands were first to sow

The little seed by Fate decreed to grow,

To the sweet roses of our English tongue,

The immortal, honeyed measures sung,

The lucid radiance fine ;

Not the clipt speech, the dark mock-mysteries

Shall ever charm like these,

Such praise be never mine !

But let me still regard with straining sight

The perilous steep, the yet unconquered height,

Let me a little higher than the plain,

Admire, aspire, faint, and recede again,

Advancing, failing, still

Not far above the sights and sounds of life,
The humble hearts of men, the toil, the strife,
Let me unmarked admire
The cloud-wrapt heights, the dark glooms dealing fire,
For should I gain even for a moment's space
To see the young Apollo face to face,
Pressing my feet against the sacred hill,
What gain were it to feel
Life hid no worthy secret to reveal,
No thick-veiled heights beyond ;
And I, knowing how weak my voice and brain,
Should feel not joy, but an immense despond,
And for the chequered victories that were,
Only a blank despair ?

Therefore I seek not praise,
But with my lot am well content,
If only, when my days are done,
Somewhere beneath the aspect of the sun,

Haply some grateful, humbler soul shall say :

“ Not on himself he spent

*What modest gift was his, nor on wise brains and
strong,*

But to the toiling, unregarded crowd

Of souls, by Time and Labour bent and bowed,

For solace of their daily burden, vowed

His litany of Song.”

SHERBORNE

AN ODE

SUNG ON ITS 350TH ANNIVERSARY

April 20, 1900

I

'Tis fifty years since last we met to keep our festal
day,

And many are gone, and some are here, tho' wrinkled
now and grey ;

The long dim past grows clearer as we meet, and not
in vain

Recall the fleeting days of youth and turn to boys
again !

Our years increase, our blood runs slow, we hasten
to grow old,
But never shall our souls forget, till heart and hand
are cold ;

The old school, the dear school, where we
were boys together ;
The old days, the dear days of life's young
April weather ;
When the future filled with gleams of gold
the musing boyish eye,
And all the world seemed at our feet, and
hopeful hearts beat high !

II

Many have since by East and West found glory or a
tomb,
Some toiled for God and country 'mid the city's
stifling gloom,

Some midst wrangling of the Forum, or dull chaffer-
ing of the Mart,
Have slaved for children and for home, contented
with their part ;
Their years increased, their limbs moved slow, they
hastened to grow old,
But never did their souls forget, till heart and hand
were cold ;

The old school, the dear school, where we
were boys together ;
The old days, the dear days of life's young
April weather ;
When the future filled with gleams of gold
the musing boyish eye,
And all the world seemed at our feet, and
hopeful hearts beat high !

III

Grey are our heads, but still there come bright lads
with sunny hair,
The gay throngs wake the cloistered courts where
once their grandsires were,
Youth, like a red rose, lights the shade with gleams
of rising day ;
Dear Lord ! guide Thou their footsteps while they
tread life's perilous way ;
Increase their years, make strong their limbs, prepare
them to grow old,
But never let their souls forget, till heart and hand
are cold ;

The old school, the dear school, where we
were boys together ;

The old days, the dear days of life's young
April weather ;

When the future filled with gleams of gold
the musing boyish eye,
And all the world seemed at our feet, and
hopeful hearts beat high !

IV

We are strangers when we visit now the scenes we
loved before,
The playfields and the river where we raced and
plunged of yore ;
Youth blossoms, and shall blossom still when centuries
have gone,
And young lives, to-day undreamt of, shall press
tireless, fearless, on ;
Their years shall grow, their limbs move slow, and
they in turn grow old,
But never may their souls forget, till heart and hand
are cold ;

The old school, the dear school, where they
were boys together ;

The old days, the dear days of life's young
April weather ;

When the future filled with gleams of gold
the musing boyish eye,

And all the world seemed at their feet, and
hopeful hearts beat high !

v

Let us band ourselves together, sons of Sherborne,
young and old,

Let us swear it by the Minster, while the curfew bell
is tolled ;

Come good or evil fortune, bright successes, dreary
days,

For the old school which nourished us we thrill with
love and praise.

Our years increase, our blood runs slow, we hasten
to grow old,
But never shall our souls forget, till heart and hand
are cold ;

The old school, the dear school, where we
were boys together ;

The old days, the dear days of life's young
April weather ;

When the future filled with gleams of gold
the musing boyish eye,

And all the world seemed at our feet, and
hopeful hearts beat high !

RHYME, THE CONSOLER

'THE injuries of Time,
The treacherous years,
Fate's pitiless march sublime,
Life's hopes and fears,
Defeats, calamities ;

Their lives scant power in Man, to master such as these.

There is no comfort left
In rite or spell,
For lives of love bereft,
Or loved too well,
Long, self-inflicted grief,

Alas ! Time brings for such nor solace nor relief.

The princely gains of Thought,

Knowledge the Queen,

No remedy have brought

For what has been,

Nor healing balm impart ;

The philosophic brain soothes not the stricken heart.

But who with steadfast mind

And musing eye,

To either fate resigned,

Questions not why,

For him, not all in vain

Rhyme brings with honeyed tones an anodyne to pain.

A VISION

Oh, wonder ! oh, transport !

Oh, ecstasy ! that fills the purgèd sight

With beams of golden light.

And is this then the old familiar Earth,

Or a new sphere gained by a second birth ?

As waking from my cloistered slumbers deep,

I spurn the caves of sleep.

Oh, wonder surpassing !

A hundred suns for one, with constant light,

Awake the ethereal air and banish Night ;

Sleep shrinks abashed, and Sleep's half-sister Death,

Nor Time disturbs, nor Age, nor failing breath,

While high ineffable rhythms roll around

Harmonious waves of sound.

Oh, glory ! oh, rapture !

For lo ! the troubles and the toils are past,
Done are the chequered years of Earth at last,
The wandering footsteps on the unlighted way ;
Here the new Dawn ushers unfailing Day.
Oh, calm effulgence from a cloudless sky !
Spirit ! is this to die ?

Oh, marvel ! oh, glory !

For see once more the lost are here again,
Unchanged in aught, yet purged of earthly stain ;
And lo ! the saints, the sages, a white throng
Chanting with accents clear the Eternal song,
Martyrs of Truth who bare in every age
The World's despite and rage.

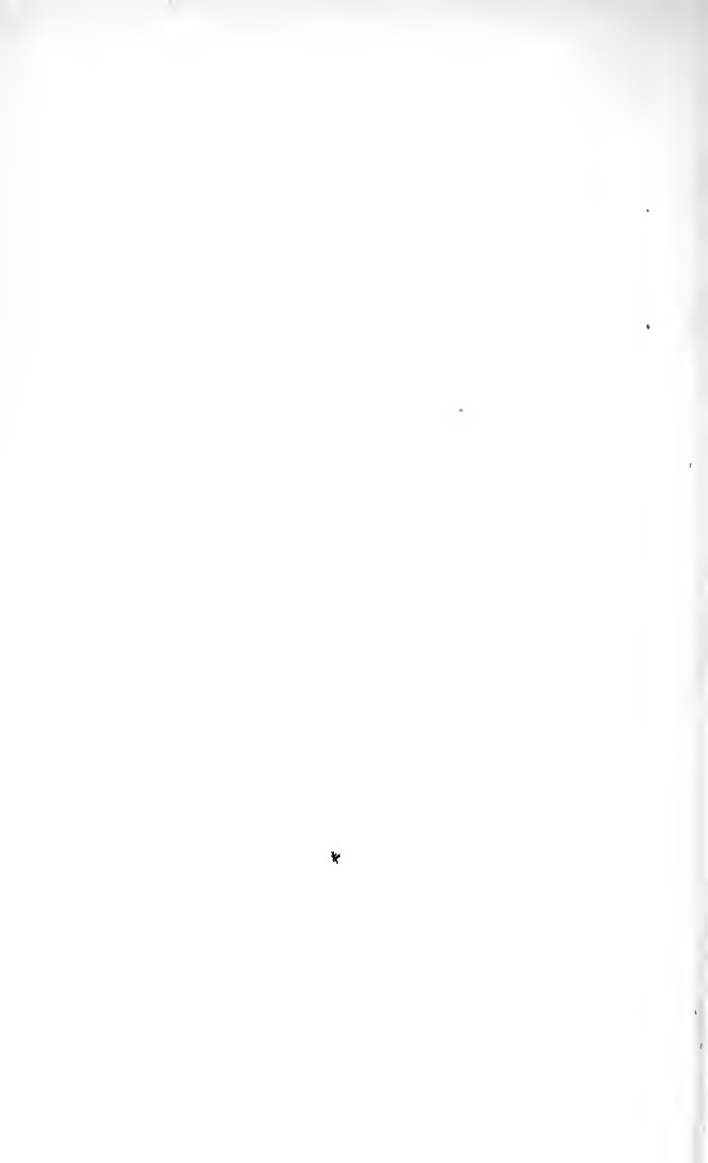
Oh, vision enchanting !

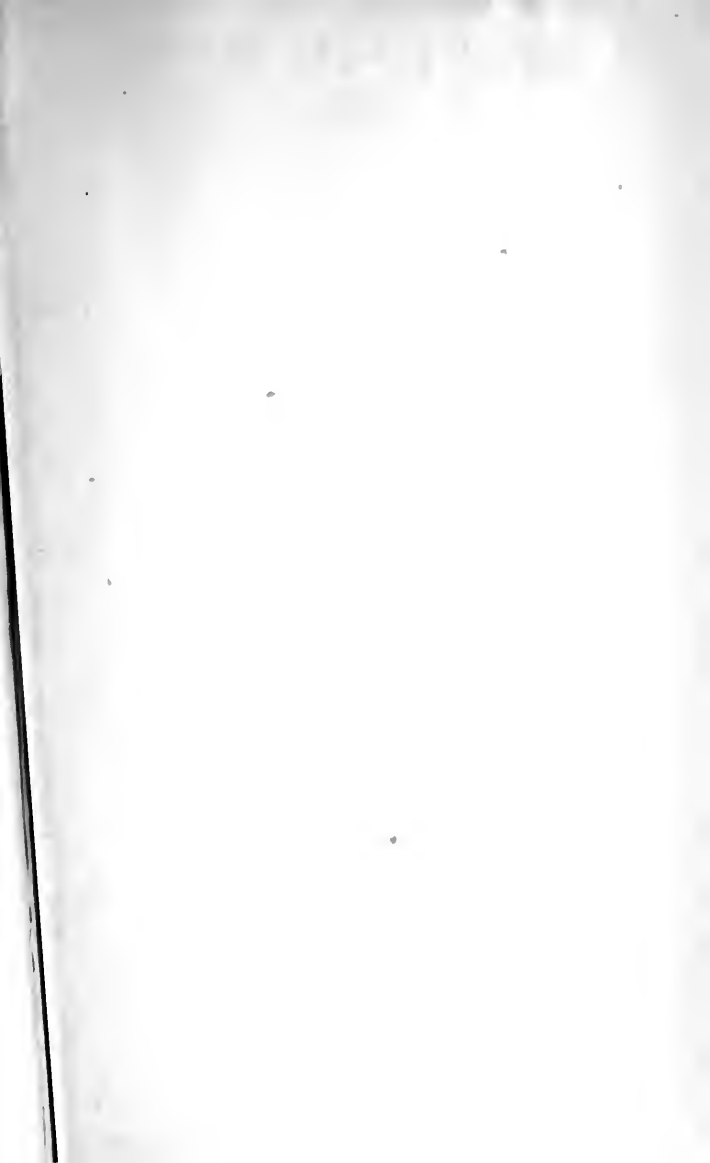
Here there is work for all ; dutiful, blest,
Sweeter and higher far than idle rest,

Work that exalts the man above the brute ;
Laborious days that never fail of fruit ;
Forces that faint not ; brains that never tire ;
Souls that aspire ! aspire !

Oh, wonder amazing !
Lo ! 'tis the self-same world, tho' seeming strange
By some ineffable change,
And such transforming radiance grown divine
As never on the sad old Earth might shine.
And hark, the long-hushed tones of homely love,
And lo ! the clear calm eyes which looked above.
Yea, here or leagues beyond the farthest sun
Nor life, nor love are done !

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